

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 06248364 3

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

IRM  
(ALBAN  
WORTH





THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY  
540 EAST 57TH STREET  
CHICAGO, ILL. 60637  
U.S.A.

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

ALBANY AND OF HUDSON,

WITH

ANECDOTES AND SKETCHES

OF

MEN AND THINGS.

BY IGNATIUS JONES.

---

ALBANY:

PRINTED BY C. VAN BENTHUYSEN.

.....  
1850.





RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

OF ALBANY,

From 1800 to 1808:

WITH SOME ADDITIONAL MATTER.

SECOND EDITION.



ALBANY:

PRINTED BY CHARLES VAN BENTHUYSEN.

•••••  
1850.

[We take the liberty to insert, by the way of PREFACE to this second edition, the following Letter from the Author.]

## TO THE PUBLISHER:

AGREEABLY to your request, though not without some misgivings, I send you, herewith, a few additional pages, of "Random Recollections." It would be easy to fill a volume with such scraps as these; but to do justice to the subject, would require more time than I can *now* conveniently spare. The ground is to be carefully surveyed, prior to any act of occupation. There are many choice anecdotes that cannot yet be told; many amusing scenes that cannot, with propriety, be described; and a long list of original characters, that it would, even at this distant date, be premature to sketch. Still, there are materials enough within the rule of right, to satisfy all reasonable curiosity; some little time, however, is indispensable to their collection and judicious arrangement for exhibition. But, the novelty of the thing, I apprehend, has, in some measure, worn off, and unless the future recollections should be of a better quality than those I now send you, it would be as useless to *continue* the work, as it would be to re-publish the original copy without additions.

To the handsome style in which the thing was printed; to the liberality and laudatory tone of your city press, and to the good nature of the citizens of Albany, I attribute the favorable reception and ready sale of the first edition. But, it should be remembered, that nothing is new but once, that liberality and good nature may be over-taxed; and that the "recollections," being local in their character and limited in their range, can excite little or no interest beyond the confines of your city. But the risk and expense of publication are yours, and if you really think it worth while to try the town with another edition, the few scraps I send you may, perhaps, authorize the printer's d—l to insert in the title page, the catching phrase, "WITH ADDITIONS;" and to strengthen this important announcement, I place at your disposal an entire new batch, (written some two years since,) entitled "RECOLLECTIONS OF HUDSON." These, you may publish separately, or together with their Albany relatives, (or not at all,) as you may think best. I have no wish other than that you should not lose money by the idle sketchings of my pen.

Your friend and ob't serv't,

IGNATIUS JONES.

JONESBURGH, JANUARY, 1850.



## RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS.

---

THE election of Mr. Jefferson to the presidency, produced a new era in the political history of men and things throughout the United States. So great was the change, and so sudden the turn of the executive wheel, that the event was felt through all the ramifications of society, and the period became as memorable as that of the birth of the nation. Many, even at the present day, refer to it in their computations of time, as to one of those fixed periods, which are alike familiar to the learned and the unlearned. It is, indeed, one of those chronological meridians, from which we calculate the degrees of time, advancing or receding as the case may be. Thus, instead of saying, "in the year 1801," or "at the beginning of the nineteenth century," we say, "at the period of Mr. Jefferson's election." Either phrase sufficiently designates the time referred to: the choice is, of course, op-

tional, and the mode of expression a mere matter of taste.

In commencing these reminiscences, I prefer to say that my first visit to Albany was just before the election of Mr. Jefferson, or the *Great Apostle* as he is sometimes called. Not that the visit had any thing to do, either with the election of Mr. Jefferson or the fortunes of his followers, but because it was an epoch in my own personal history, as the election of Mr. Jefferson was, in the history of the country.

I had then just launched my "light untimbered bark" upon the ocean of life; with no guide but providence, and with no hand but my own to direct its course. Never shall I forget the deep feeling of loneliness that came over me when the receding headlands of my native bay disappeared in the distance, and I found myself, for the first time in my life, *alone on the waters*.

It was at the age of eighteen, and in the autumn of the year eighteen hundred, that I first set my foot within the precincts of the ancient and far-famed city of Albany. It is true, I had passed *through* the city some ten or twelve years before, but 'twas on a rainy day, and in a covered wagon; and as the only glimpse I had of the town, was obtained through a hole in the can-

vas, I set it down as nothing, since, in reality, it amounted to nothing.

I am, however, well aware that an intelligent, sharp-sighted English traveller, such for instance, as Fearon, Hall, or Marryat would have seen, even through a smaller aperture, and under less favorable circumstances, enough to have enabled him to have given you, not only the exact topography of the town and its localities, but a full and accurate account of its different religious denominations, the state of its society, the number of its slaves, and the character of its inns; together with many sage reflections upon the demoralizing tendency of republican governments!

But this faculty of taking in all things at a single glance; this ability to see more than is to be seen, is one of the many advantages which the English traveller possesses over all others, and which in fact distinguishes him from the traveller of every other country on the face of the globe — *the land of Munchausen not excepted!* I mention these things merely to satisfy the reader that I *might* have made something out of the affair of the *covered wagon*, had I been so disposed. But 'tis not my intention, nor was it when I commenced these reminiscences, to draw upon my imagination for a single fact. I have

materials in abundance, and cannot, therefore, be tempted to go out of my way to *recollect incidents which never happened*, or to describe things which I never saw.

The city of Albany, in 1800, though the capital of the State, and occupying a commanding position, was, nevertheless, in point of size, commercial importance, and architectural dignity, but a third or fourth rate town. It was not, in some respects, what it *might* have been; but it was, in all respects, unlike what it now is. Its population could not, I think, have exceeded some seven or eight thousand. I know not what the *statistics* may say, nor is it material, for no man of sense puts the least faith in documents compiled by politicians, or published by authority. Most of Uncle Sam's figurers, particularly those that belong to the Treasury Department, figure frequently in the dark, and always at random. With them, the addition or omission of a cypher or two is, it would seem, of but little consequence. Hence their statistics, whether elaborated by the imposing genius of a Woodbury or a Walker, go for nothing with me. But to the subject.

Albany has probably undergone a greater change, not only in its physical aspect, but in

the habits and character of its population, than any other city in the United States. It was, even in 1800 an old town, (with one exception, I believe, the oldest in the country,) but the face of nature in and around it had been but little disturbed. Old as it was, it still retained its primitive aspect, and still stood in all its original simplicity; maintaining its quaint and quiescent character, unchanged, unmodified, unimproved: still pertinaciously adhering, in all its walks, to the old track and the old form.

The rude hand of innovation, however, was then just beginning to be felt; and slight as was the touch, it was felt as an injury, or resented as an insult.

Nothing could be more unique or picturesque to the eye, than Albany in its primitive days. Even at the period above mentioned, it struck me as peculiarly naive and beautiful. All was antique, clean and quiet. There was no noise, no hurry, no confusion. There was no putting up, nor pulling down; no ill-looking excavations, no leveling of hills, no filling up of valleys: in short, none of those villainous improvements, which disfigure the face of nature, and exhibit the restless spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race. The stunted pines still covered the hills to the very

edge of the city, and the ravines and valleys were clothed with evergreens, intermixed with briars, and spangled with the wild rose.

The margin of the river, with the exception of an opening at the foot of State-street, extending down to the ferry, was overhung with willows, and shaded by the wide spreading elm. The little islands below the town were feathered with foliage down to the very water's edge, and bordered with stately trees, whose forms were mirrored in the stream below. As far as the eye could extend, up and down the river, all remained comparatively wild and beautiful, while the city itself was a curiosity; nay, a perfect jewel of antiquity, particularly to the eye of one who had been accustomed to the "white house, green door, and brass knocker," of the towns and villages of New-England. Nothing, indeed, could be more picturesque than the view of North Pearl-street, from the old elm at Webster's corner, up to the new two-steepled church. Pearl-street, it must be remembered, was, in those days, the west end of the town; for there the town ended, and there resided some of the most aristocratic of the ancient burghers. There, a little after sunrise, in a mild spring morning, might be seen, sitting by the side of their doors, the ancient and



venerable mynheers, with their little sharp cocked hats, or red-ringed worsted caps, (as the case might be,) drawn tight over their heads. There they sat, like monuments of a former age, still lingering on the verge of time; or like milestones upon a turnpike road, *solus in solo!* or, in simple English, *unlike* any thing I had ever seen before. But there they sat, smoking their pipes in that dignified silence, and with that phlegmatic gravity, which would have done honor to Sir Walter Van Twiller, or even to Puffendorf himself. The whole line of the street, on either side, was dotted by the little clouds of smoke, that, issuing from their pipes, and, curling round their noddles, rose slowly up the antique gables, and mingled with the morning air; giving beauty to the scene, and adding an air of life to the picture. But the great charm was in the novelty of the thing. I had seen a dutch house before, but never till then had I seen a row of dutchmen, smoking in a dutch city.

Albany was indeed dutch, in all its moods and tenses; thoroughly and inveterately dutch. The buildings were dutch—dutch in style, in position, attitude and aspect. The people were dutch, the horses were dutch, and even the dogs were dutch. If any confirmation were wanting, as to the origin

and character of the place, it might be found in the old dutch church, which was itself always to be found in the middle of State-street, looking as if it had been wheeled out of line by the giants of old, and there left; or had dropped down from the clouds in a dark night, and had stuck fast where it fell.

All the old buildings in the city—and they constituted a large majority—were but one story high, with sharp peaked-roofs, surmounted by a *rooster*, vulgarly called a weathercock. Every house, having any pretensions to dignity, was placed with its gable end to the street, and was ornamented with huge iron numericals, announcing the date of its erection; while from its eaves long wooden gutters, or spouts, projected in front some six or seven feet, so as to discharge the water from the roof, when it rained, directly over the centre of the sidewalks. This was probably contrived for the benefit of those who were compelled to be out in wet weather, as it furnished them with an extra shower-bath free of expense.

But the destined hour was drawing near. The Yankees were creeping in. Every day added to their number; and the unhallowed hand of innovation was seen pointing its impertinent finger

at the cherished habits and venerated customs of the ancient burghers. These meddling eastern Saxons at length obtained a majority in the city councils; and then came an order, *with a handsaw*, to "cut off those spouts." Nothing could exceed the consternation of the aforesaid burghers, upon the announcement of this order. Had it been a decree abolishing their mother tongue, it could hardly have excited greater astonishment, or greater indignation. "What!" said they, "are our own spouts, then, to be measured and graduated by a corporation standard! Are they to be cut off or fore-shortened, without our knowledge or consent!" But the Dutch still retained the obstinacy, if not the valor of their ancestors. They rallied their forces, and at the next election, the principal author of the obnoxious order (my old friend Elkanah Watson,) was elected *a constable* of the ward in which he lived! This done, they went to sleep again; and before they awoke, new swarms had arrived, and a complete and thorough revolution had taken place. The Yankees were in possession of the city! and the fate of the Dutch was sealed.

The old families, however, still claimed the lead in all matters relating to good society. The city assemblies were still under their control, as

well in regard to time and place, as in the power of admission and exclusion. In the exercise of this prerogative, a little jealousy of the Yankees was occasionally manifested. The difficulty was, *to know who was who*; to distinguish between those that were entitled to admission, and those that were not. Mere respectability was not of itself sufficient; nor was wealth to be considered as a *certain* passport. It was necessary that there should be something of rank, of family, or of fashion, to entitle a *new comer* to a seat among the notables. These matters, however, were, as a matter of course, left to the younger branches of the ancient aristocracy, to regulate as they saw fit.

Now it happened, that into this ancient and somewhat exclusive circle of good society, had slid many families, with their twigs and branches, who had in reality none of the rights and claims of the genuine Knickerbockers; and who were, as far as *antiquity* was concerned, mere squatters; yet they were found to be greater sticklers for exclusion and probation, than the veritable mynheers themselves. Still, up to 1803 or 4, things went on tolerably well: at all events, there was no complaint. The assemblies were sufficiently select as to quality, and perhaps sufficiently

liberal in their range as to number. But, somewhere about the period referred to, the self-constituted managers held a meeting, at which it was determined that the city assemblies should in future be "*more select*;" and that "*a line of distinction*," as they termed it, should be drawn. Accordingly a new list was made out, by which it was soon ascertained that several, heretofore admitted, had been left off, and many others excluded, that were thought to be better entitled to admission than many that were retained. The measure, therefore, was taken in high dudgeon by the friends of the excluded parties, and was considered as a piece of arrogance, even by those who had no personal cause of complaint.

A paper war was immediately commenced, and the character and pretension of the managers were ridiculed and satirized in a style as new as it was amusing. A series of poetical epistles, odes, satires, &c. &c., appeared in rapid succession; some of them displaying a good deal of taste and cleverness. One piece in particular, entitled "The Conspiracy of the Nobles," written in mock heroic verse, contained some capital hits. It gave a highly poetic description of the first meeting of the managers, and an amusing sketch of their persons, pretensions, characters and de-

bates.\* The most ridiculous speeches were of

\*[I QUOTE FROM MEMORY THE FOLLOWING AS A SAMPLE.]

Next, up rose Milo, with a graceful mein, }  
 No comelier noble on the floor was seen, }  
 And all undaunted stood, with phiz serene. }  
 Thrice e'er he spoke, with easy grace he bow'd,

Twice to the king, once only to the crowd:  
 His hand sincere, he plac'd upon his breast.  
 And thus his majesty and peers address'd.

"I wage no war, with either great or small;  
 A neutral post I hold, or none at all:  
 Of squibs, of jarring factions, plebeian bands  
 And proud nobility, I wash my hands.  
 My *interests only*, henceforth I'll pursue,  
 To please *all men*, henceforth shall be my cue."

He ceased and sat, when with terrific frown,  
 That darkened all the hall and half the town,  
 Lord Roderick rose, and 'neath the awful shade,  
 His proud imaginations thus display'd.

"Ye gods! and is it come to this, that *we*,  
 The city's proud and prime nobility,  
 Should waive our right of birth, our rank and place  
 To gratify this new and upstart race!  
 Let those who will, to base-born interests bend  
 I scorn the trading tribe, the truckling friend.  
 Though round my head plebeian placards flit,  
 With saucy satire fill'd, and damning wit;  
 Though the whole town should join the vulgar throng,  
 And point the finger as I pass along,  
 Still would I wear my wonted lordly face,  
 And vindicate the honors of my race.  
 Sooner than yield to their insurgent claims,  
 I'd see the hills o'erthrown, the town in flames.  
 Sooner than mingle in their turbid flood,  
 And dance with doxies of plebeian blood,  
 I'd see the assemblies to perdition hurl'd,  
 And round them piled the fiddlers of the world!  
 I'd see old Jove, on his imperial height,  
 Blot out the stars and quench the solar light:  
 I'd see the angry gods their vengeance pour,  
 And hear, unmoved, eternal chaos roar!"

He ended—and applauding murmurs ran  
 In echoing circles round the sage Divan.  
 When, rising from his seat with scornful look,  
 Thus spoke VAN TRUMP,—and spoke it like a book.

"I view, my Lords, with deep disgust these jars,  
 These petty jealousies and paper wars,  
 And above all, this 'blotting out the stars!'  
 This mighty nonsense! this uproar about  
 The right of entrance at a dancing rout.  
 For shame, my Lords! for once, be wise—be civil,  
 And send your starch'd exclusives to the devil!  
 Take my advice—throw wide your ball-room door,  
 Add to your music six, and sand the floor!  
 Take, *take the Yankees in*, and end this fuss,  
 Or, be assured, my Lords, *they'll take in us!*"

course put into their mouths, and they were thus made to exhibit themselves in a light that was as laughable as it was absurd. These squibs were answered by the conspirators, but without the wit or the humor that characterized the pieces of their opponents. The fire, however, was kept up on both sides for several weeks, to the great amusement of the town. The result was a mortifying defeat on the part of the exclusionists. The assemblies, as a matter of course, fell into the hands of the victorious party, and, to their credit, be it said, were conducted with more taste and propriety, and were indeed more brilliantly attended than they had ever been before.

This was considered as a victory of wit over impudence, or rather of sense over nonsense. It is but just, however, to add, that the real old Knickerbocker families took but very little interest in the contest, and were probably not much displeased at the discomfiture of their quondam allies.

Let us now turn to revolutions of a graver import.

A restless, levelling, innovating spirit, now prevailed throughout the city. The detested word *improvement* was in every mouth, and resistance was unavailing. The stunted pines became

alarmed, and gradually receded. The hills themselves gave way. New streets opened their extended lines, and the old ones grew wider. The roosters on the gable heads, that for more than a century had braved the *Indians and the breeze*; that had even flapped their wings and crowed in the face of Burgoyne himself, now gave it up, and came quietly down. The gables in despair soon followed, and more imposing fronts soon reared their corniced heads. The old Dutch church itself, though thought to be immortal submitted to its fate, and fell! not at the foot of Pompey's statue, exactly, but at the foot of State-street, which, freed from that obstruction, thenceforward became the Rialto of the city, where pedlars of stale sea-cod, and country hucksters, "now do congregate."

Even the dogs now began to bark in broken english: many of them, indeed had already caught the Yankee twang, so rapid was the progress of refinement. In the process of a few brief years, all that was venerable in the eyes of the ancient burghers disappeared. Then came the great eclipse of 1806, which clearly announced the fall and final end of the dutch dynasty. It is hardly necessary to say, that not an iron rooster has crowed upon the gable heads, nor a civil



cocked hat been seen in the ancient city of Albany, from that day to this!

But let it be remembered, that if the growth of Albany was slow, its position rendered it sure. The great west, in 1800, was comparatively a wilderness. With the growth of this vast interior, Albany has grown: it has increased with its increase, and strengthened with its strength. No hand, however strong, no enterprise, however active, could have carried it forward one hour faster than it went. Its trade was necessarily dependent upon the population and products of the west, and with these it has fairly kept pace.

It is, however, true that the ancient Dutch families, though among the most wealthy and respectable, were not the most enterprising, nor the most active. Many of them possessed large landed estates, lived upon their incomes, and left to others the toils and profits of trade. At the head of this class, and distinguished for his many excellent and amiable qualities, stood the late patroon, Stephen Van Rensselaer: a man widely and honorably known; rich without pride, and liberal without ostentation. I may also mention the name of Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, a whig of the revolution, and for several years Lieutenant-

Governor of the state: a frank, stout-hearted old gentleman, universally respected.

Generall Ten Brook, also of the revolutionary school, distinguished for his activity, intelligence and public spirit.

Cornelius Van Schelluyne, the then best living type of the ancient race; rich, honest, independent, unlettered and unpretending.

In alluding to these ancient and wealthy families, that of the Gansevoorts should not be omitted: for it is connected with the patriotism and the triumphs of the revolution. "The hero of Fort Stanwix" has left to his descendants a time-honored name—a name that belongs to the history of the country, and to one of its most interesting and important periods.

But those of a more active and business-like character among the Dutch, were the Bleeckers, the Lansings, the Douws, the Van Schaicks, the Ten Eycks, the Ten Broecks, the Pruyns, the Hochstrassers, the Van Loons, and the Staatses. The principal merchants of the city, however—those who gave life and character to its business interests—were citizens of a more recent date, coming from different parts of the Union, but mostly from New-England. Among these, were James Kane, Dudley Walsh, William James,

Isaiah Townsend, Gilbert Stewart, Thomas Gould, Thomas Mather, William, John, and Alexander Marvin, Peter and John I. Boyd, John Spencer & Co., John and Spencer Stafford, Issac and George Hutton, the Messrs. Webbs, and many others.

There was still another class, not less active, nor less important, in a business point of view. I allude to a then comparatively new, or recently established body of mechanics, of which Benjamin Knower was confessedly at the head. Mr. Knower was indeed a man of strong mind and persevering energy of character. Through *his* influence, the charter of the Mechanics' and Farmers' Bank was obtained; and the mechanics of the city of Albany rose in consideration and respect, personal and political, to a height which they had never before reached.

Among the merchants (I speak of the period from 1800 to 1808), Mr. Kane was perhaps the most prominent. He was, indeed, in many respects, the most prominent man in the city: prominent from his extensive operations and business connections; prominent from his wealth, his liberality, his marked attention to strangers, his gentlemanly style of dress, and bachelor mode of living. He was distinguished, too, by an address and manner so singularly polite and

courteous as seemingly to border upon excess. But let it be remembered, to his honor, that as no man in the city was more generally known, so there was no one more generally or more highly respected. The courtesy or politeness of Mr. Kane did not, however, consist in mere words or modes of expression. It had its foundation in good feeling—I may say in humanity, which speaks to the heart, and is understood where words are not; which, rising superior to forms and fashions, borrows nothing from art, nothing from eloquence.

I shall venture, by way of illustration, to give an instance of this sort of politeness. There appeared at the dinner table of the Tontine Coffee House, where Mr. Kane then boarded, and at a time when the house was crowded to excess, an old gentleman and his wife. They were very plainly dressed, but still respectable in their appearance. They were, evidently, country people, “from down east;” and were probably bound on a visit to their relations in the west. The servants, always too few in number, were now altogether insufficient to attend to the wants of the company at table. The old people, therefore, being strangers, and unknown to any one, were totally neglected. It was shameful! I made

one or two efforts to get a servant to attend to them, but all in vain: there were too many louder and more authoritative calls. At length, however, they were noticed by Mr. Kane, who looked round for his own servant, but finding him engaged, immediately left his seat and walked down to the lower end of the table where the old couple sat, and politely asked them what they would be helped to; took their plates to a side-table, carved for them himself, helped them to vegetables, bread, &c., and then returned quietly to his seat. He was doubtless taken by the old people, and perhaps *by other* strangers, for the master of the house, or the *head waiter*! There was certainly no gentleman present who dared to run the risk of being so mistaken. But Mr. Kane could afford it. The politeness, or, more properly speaking, the humanity of the act, did him honor, and far outweighed the momentary, or rather the *imaginary* loss of dignity.

As a people, we cannot be sufficiently grateful to Providence for the character of our ancestors. From the Puritans of England, the Huguenots of France, and the Protestants of the Netherlands, did this country derive the seeds and elements of its greatness: its purity of faith, its principles, and its power. To them, under Providence, are

we indebted for our civil and religious liberties, the character of our institutions, and the hardy, resolute and enterprising spirit of the nation. Talents and virtues are alike hereditary, though the stream is not always unbroken by shallows, nor the measure of its greatness always full. There must, I think, have been a strong fund of good sense and native talent in the early Dutch settlers. We have seen it break out occasionally, even in the fourth and fifth generations; and sometimes, too, quite unexpectedly, as in the case of Ex-President Van Buren, whose immediate antecedents gave no promise of such an eruption, or even foreshadowed the probability of such an event. Still, in all such cases, there must have been a living spring (no matter how remote) from whence the waters flowed.

Among the Dutch families of Albany, in which a strong vein of original talent, occasionally manifested itself, were those of the Schuylers, the Van Vechtens, the Lansings, and the Yates's. General Schuyler, of the Revolution, was a man of great vigor of mind, strong sense, and sound judgment; which was happily associated with liberal feelings, and principles of honor and patriotism. He should by right have commanded that army in the revolutionary war, which,

in the day of battle, he joined as a volunteer,—a man greatly his inferior having been placed over his head. But no neglect or injury could alienate his feelings, or weaken his attachment to the cause of his country.

The talents and character of Abraham Van Vechten, are still fresh in the memory of the living. He was one of the ablest members of the Albany bar, when that bar was studded with eminent names.

Chancellor Lansing, though not possessed of shining talents, was nevertheless a man of good abilities and of strict integrity. His brother, Abraham G., was a man of sound sense and vigorous tone of mind; rough, and somewhat abrupt in his manner, but upright, frank and fearless, in conduct and in character.

Old Judge Yates, one of the members of the Convention that framed the Constitution, was a clear-headed, strong-minded man; straight forward, honest and patriotic. His son, John Van Ness Yates, was a man of talents, both natural and acquired. He was equal to the duties of any station, and to the difficulties of any task. He was a wit, a poet, a belles-lettres scholar, and a boon companion, whose joke was ever ready, and whose laugh was contagious. He wanted no-

thing but industry and self-respect, to have made him eminent as a lawyer. His associations were beneath him, not only in point of talent, but in character; yet they affected his interests rather than his principles. He possessed the readiest apprehension, and the most retentive memory, of any man I ever knew. All that he had ever read, and he had read a vast deal, was at his fingers ends. He was often consulted by the younger members of the bar, while walking in the streets; and, without a moment's hesitation, would take out his pencil and write down what was the law in the case, and where it was to be found—volume, chapter and verse! From these frequent street consultations, he was called “the walking library.”

But the cleverest man of the name or family, was John W. Yates. He was a man of education, of talents, of natural eloquence, and of extensive reading. He was the best classical scholar in the city—Judge Kent not excepted. He was familiar with the greek, latin and french languages and literature; a mathematician, and a passionate lover of the belles-lettres. He was bred to the law, but never attempted to practice; yet, I repeat, he was naturally eloquent, and, in his buoyant moments, one of the most lively and



agreeable men in conversation that I ever met with.

Such a man, it is natural to suppose, made a figure in his day: no such thing; he made no figure at all. He was not appreciated by the public, because the public knew nothing of him. He was not known even to his friends, for the very good and sufficient reason that his friends knew nothing of greek or latin, of mathematics or of poetry. It was curious to find him reading Homer with a pipe in his mouth; and to see him turn from the page of Thucydides, to talk dutch. Yet this alternation between the languages of Athens and Amsterdam, was in some measure unavoidable; for many of his old friends, and indeed most of the old families, continued to speak, in their domestic circles, the language of their ancestors long after the period to which these sketches refer.

Though no man set a higher value upon literary acquirements than himself, yet he took no pains to exhibit, much less to profit by those he possessed. Political distinction he never sought, and never desired. He had no taste for popular parade, no love for public display. He was, in fact, better acquainted with Pericles and Xenophon than he was with the aldermen of the ward

in which he lived. His knowledge of ancient history was more perfect than that of any other man I ever knew, nor was that of modern Europe less familiar. History, poetry and philosophy; Egypt and Asia, Athens and Rome, with all their classic superstitions and diviner arts, were the subjects of many an evening conversation, to which I listened with delight.

To this faint sketch of his literary character, I may add, that no man possessed a higher sense of honor, or was governed in his conduct by purer principles. His talents and his tastes were, indeed, altogether above the position in which he was placed; and hence, instead of giving him celebrity, they served but to render him, in some measure, unsuited to the station he held. But never will that station, or that official rank, be again honored with so much learning, combined with so much talent.

Let it not be supposed that this is a mere fancy sketch, "writ for the sake of writing it." It is a tribute justly due to the memory of a man whose merits were unappreciated, and comparatively unknown. It is a tribute which I owe to the recollection of his partiality and kindness; to the memory of many a friendly lecture—many a social—many a pleasant hour.

Of the public men of Albany, Office holders, Politicians and Jurists, it may be expected that I should say something. Among the most prominent were Geo. Clinton, Jno. Taylor, Ambrose Spencer, James Kent, Chancellor Lansing, Abraham Van Vechten, John V. Henry, John Woodworth, Thos. Tillotson, Abraham G. Lansing, Elisha Jenkins, Edmond Charles Genet, and last, though not least, the editor of the Albany Register, Solomon Southwick! These are names too well known to require any comment. *Many* of them are identified with the history of the State, and will be chronicled in its pages.

I can not in courtesy, however, pass over my old friend Southwick, without some other notice than that of a mere casual glance of recognition.

Southwick was a man of genius, with all the peculiarities that belong to that temperament—its strength and its weakness, its excellencies and its errors: its delusive dreams and visions, its providence and its instability. He had great fertility of mind, united with great enthusiasm. This was the source of his eloquence and his power. His writings were rather *outpourings* than compositions. Yet he imbued them with so much life and animation, that he seldom failed to carry his readers with them. His style, though well

adapted to the popular ear, was redundant in epithet, inflated and declamatory, and his language, though often strong and impressive, was yet in the main, loose and inelegant. He read but little, and only from necessity. He referred to books for particular facts, rather than for general information.

He was, by nature, honest, warm-hearted, and generous to a fault, but seemed to have no fixed or settled principles. In ethics, as well as in politics, he travelled from pole to pole. Yet, the kindness of his nature went with him and never forsook him. His heart and his hand were always open; and as he was credulous to excess, and even superstitious, he was, as a matter of course, swindled by every knave, and duped by every impostor, he met with upon the road.

He was extremely fluent and even eloquent in conversation. But he had little knowledge of the world, and the predominance of interest or of passion, left his judgment too often at fault. He had the finest eye and forehead that ever belonged to mortal man, but every other feature of his face, was either indifferent or defective. His countenance, therefore, was a correct index to the character of his mind—incongruous, mixed, and full of contradictions.

THE ALBANY REGISTER, which he so long and ably edited, was pronounced, by Judge Spencer, to be the "*Political Bible* of the Western District." A greater compliment was certainly never paid to the conductor of a political journal.

Mr. Southwick held, at different periods, the office of State printer, clerk of the House of Assembly, sheriff of the county of Albany, president of the Mechanics' and Farmers' Bank, and postmaster of the city. Even in the cloudy days of his latter years, when friends, fame and fortune, had forsaken him, when every objectionable act of his life was spread upon the record, and all his faults and weaknesses blazoned to the public eye; even then he received over *Thirty Thousand votes* for governor of the State.

Of the clergy of those days, if I am wise, I shall say but little: first, because I recollect but little; and secondly, because, with me, the subject is not a debateable one. One's opinions, unless moulded early, are often formed by accident, or spring up as the result of circumstances. It has often occurred to me as not a little singular, that my attention should have been turned to the unkindred subjects of politics and religion, at about the same period of time. The noise and triumph of Mr. Jefferson's election to the presi-

dency, led me to look a little into the mysterious philosophy of party politics; and the preaching of Dr. Nott, carried me, *nolens volens*, into the Presbyterian *brick church* of South Pearl-street. Thus I acquired, at nearly one and the same time, a decided inclination to *church* and *State*; or, in other words, a marked taste for politics and preaching. No one, certainly, could have studied under abler masters: and for many of the opinions I entertain to this day, I hold those masters responsible.

But the only names belonging to the church, of which my memory took cognizance, at the period referred to, or of which I have any distinct recollection, are those of Nott, Romaine and Bradford.

Mr. Bradford was a well educated—well read—and gentlemanly man. He was, moreover, one of the handsomest men in the city, which in the minds or fancies of the fairer part of his congregation, added no doubt to his eloquence, and of course to his usefulness in the church. Mr. Romaine was an able man, of a denunciatory and vehement style of oratory—altogether too calvinistic to suit the taste of his hearers. But it must be remembered

“That no rogue e’er felt the halter draw,  
With good opinion of the law.”

Doctor Nott, I should say, was neither a Cal-

vinist nor a Lutheran. In other words, he was no bigoted sectarian; and in this respect, he bore, and still bears, I think, but little resemblance to many of his clerical brethren. In *mind*, as well as in *manner*, he stood alone. The narrow dogmas, and common place oratory of the church, were beneath him. His ambition was to make men *wiser* and *better*, rather than to promote the sectarian interests and speculative tenets of the church. The eloquent enforcement of that single injunction "to do unto others as you would have others do unto you," would to an unsophisticated mind be of more efficacy than a dozen dry discourses *upon evidence*, which no novice requires, or upon those knotty points in theology, which no intellect can comprehend. But it is not my business to preach, nor am I disposed to criticise the preaching of others. All I mean to say is, that Doctor Nott was by far the most eloquent and effective preacher of the period to which I refer; that he drew together the largest congregation—made the deepest impression, and commanded the profoundest respect.

His church was filled to overflowing. His appearance in the pulpit, his style of eloquence, his very look,

"Drew audience and attention still as night,  
Or summer's noontide air. . . . ."

His elocution was admirable, and his manner altogether better, because more impressive, than that of any other preacher of the day: yet he could not, I think, have been over twenty-eight or thirty years of age when I first heard him, which was in 1803. Shortly afterwards, I had the pleasure of becoming personally acquainted with him, and soon found he possessed powers and qualities of which his congregation little dreamed. His talents were by no means confined to pulpit eloquence, nor even to the wider range of clerical duties. His information extended to almost every department of life; and with the whole fabric of human society, he was perfectly familiar. He understood the animal *man*, not only in the abstract, but in all the detail of action, passion and propensity. He was, moreover, a mechanist, a political economist, a philosopher, and what is of more consequence in *any walk of life*, a man of keen observation and sound sense. But he is still living, and too widely known, to require any portraiture from my pen.

---

### BATTLE IN STATE-STREET.

Among other incidents and events, falling within the range of these reminiscences, was the fa-



mous *passage of arms*, that took place between an eminent citizen and a distinguished general, in one of the principal streets of the city, in open day. It was a perilous, hand to hand encounter, that brought together, at least, one half of the male population of the town—not as spectators merely, but as combatants, who, like the knights of old, entered the lists with an alacrity and a spirit, that would have done honor to the heroes of chivalry, when chivalry was in its prime, and knighthood in its glory. The full breadth of State-street, from Pearl down to the intersection of Court and Market, was literally filled with the combatants; while the doors, porches, windows, and even the house-tops on both sides, were crowded with astonished and terrified spectators. The street, viewed from any elevated position, resembled a tumultuous *sea of heads*, over which clattered a forest of canes; the vast body now surging this way, now that, as the tide of combat ebbed or flowed. It was, certainly, one of the most classic or greek-like battles that had been fought since the wars of Ilium, and the heroic days of Hector and Achilles. But as it respects the origin of the war, the names of the combatants, and the details of the fight, are they not written in the book of the

kings of Judah and Israel! If not, they may perhaps, be found in the chronicles of the lives of the illustrious fathers of the city. Certain it is that the battle has already been described; and the record, like the Iliad, will be found imperishable!

---

It is a little curious, when we consider what Albany now is, to look back and recollect, that so late as 1803, there was but *one* public house in the city; or, at least, but *one* in any respect better than a common signpost tavern, such as no gentleman of the present day would put his foot in: but that *one* was an excellent one. I allude to the Tontine Coffee House in State-street, kept by Mr. Gregory: a house distinguished from all other public houses of that day, by the quiet order that reigned through all its departments; by its perfect neatness, and the total absence of a bar. The higher rates of fare charged at the Tontine, and the fact that no liquors were sold except to its own boarders, nor *ever seen* except at table, excluded the *low* and *thirsty*, and left it, as it were by a law of its nature, open to good company alone. I need not say that it was well filled: it was, at least half the year, redundantly

full. All travellers of any note or consequence ; all foreigners of distinction ; in one word, all *gentlemen* put up at the Tontine. For a period of some ten or twelve years, Mr. Gregory had no competition, no rival house to contend with ; and was therefore compelled, I do not say *reluctantly*, to make a fortune !

Manners, 'tis said, change with customs ; and customs, we all know, change sometimes for the worse. I have seen something of public houses and hotels since Mr. Gregory's day, and am forced to acknowledge, that on the score of gentlemanly habits, politeness, and courtesy among their guests, and in reference also to the civility of their keepers and waiters, the present bears no comparison with the past. The inmates of the best hotels of the present day, are as varied in their aspects, habits and character, as were the motley herd that took lodgings in the ark ; while of their keepers and waiters, the best that can be said, is, that they are in keeping with the character of their company. An occasional exception does but strengthen the rule.

It was at the Tontine that I became acquainted with many of the leading politicians and distinguished men of the State. It was there I first saw De Witt Clinton, Alexander Hamilton, Aaron

Burr, Doctor Mason, Morgan Lewis, Daniel D. Tompkins, John Armstrong, Chancellor Livingston, and many others. It was while there, I had the opportunity and the pleasure of examining, leisurely, and with a critical eye, that lightest twig of the great Corsican tree, Mr. Jerome Bonaparte; and of observing the fine form, the careless, abandoned air, and soldierly aspect of the celebrated Moreau, the rival at once of Xenophon and Napoleon. The Tontine was, indeed, for several years, my local observatory, from which I watched the transit of the political planets, and noted the restless movements of the wandering stars. It was, in fact, the best school-house I ever entered, and the only one, I am sorry to say, in which I ever took much delight.

I cannot resist the temptation (though I know I shall make nothing of it) to relate a ludicrous circumstance which took place at the Tontine, in the summer of 1804. I am well aware that many a good joke has been spoiled, and many a *laughable* incident rendered *grave*, by an attempt to put them on paper. 'Tis useless, said Doctor Johnson, to print Quin's jokes, unless you print his face with them. Nevertheless, I shall venture to relate the circumstance to which I have referred. I shall call it

## THE STORY OF MONSIEUR GARROT.

Among the many foreigners at the Tontine in the travelling season of 1804, was a french gentleman by the name of Garrot, apparently about twenty-five or thirty years of age; remarkable for the simplicity of his manners, for his taste in music, and for his inability to speak a word of english. His personal appearance was greatly in his favor; being stout, well made, and of a most agreeable countenance. Sitting near him at table, and speaking a little french, I soon became acquainted with him. He was, I found, a german by birth, born in Frankfort, but a resident of Nantes. He remained several months in the city, was flush of money, and liberal, not to say profuse, in his expenditures.

His object, if indeed he had any, was to obtain information as to the form and character of our government; the institutions and condition of the country; its extent, population, trade, commerce, agricultural products, arts, manufactures, &c. &c. Of all the travellers I had ever met with, he was the most inquisitive. He asked ten thousand questions about things of which I knew nothing, or next to nothing — questions,

some of which, it would have puzzled Chief Justice Marshall, Mr. Madison, Mr. Clay, or Mr. Anybody Else, save John Quincy Adams, to have answered off-hand. But as I perceived he entertained a high opinion of my abilities, I had not the heart, nor was it indeed my business, to undeceive him. I was ashamed to confess ignorance upon *any point*, and therefore gave him prompt and specific answers to each and every question, let it relate to what it might: but the mischief of it was, they were all taken for gospel, and immediately noted down in his tablets.

I could not but laugh at the idea. It was, perhaps, *unfair* on my part, but the *fault* was *his*. To suppose a young man of twenty-two or three, of sufficient authority for the history and statistics of an empire, was absurd. He should have known better. Many a book, however, has been written upon information of an inferior quality to that with which I furnished Monsieur Garrot, and from a less rational, not to say reliable source. It was through the priests and poets of Egypt and Assyria, that Herodotus obtained the materials for his famous history; and who thinks the less of his history on that account? The credulity and child-like simplicity of the author, together with the traditional and poetical character

of its testimony constitute, in fact, its greatest attractions.

But Monsieur Garrot, no doubt, congratulated himself upon his good fortune in finding a person so full of information, and so ready to impart it. On the other side, I did the best I could, under the circumstances. I studied day and night to prepare myself for Mr. Garrot's questions; and if monsieur published his book, I flattered myself that it would be found in the truth of its statements and the *accuracy of its details*, at least equal to the history of Herodotus, or the travels of Basil Hall!

But this has nothing to do with the *circumstance* which it was my intention to narrate. It may serve, however, as a preface to the story, which runs thus :

Monsieur Garrot and myself, after a long walk one *Sunday* afternoon, returned to the Tontine about six o'clock. The weather was extremely hot; and as the private parlors below were filled with strangers, I accompanied Mr. Garrot to his own chamber, where, complaining of the heat, he threw off his coat, and, somewhat to my surprise, continued the operation of stripping, until he came to the last article, over which, however, he threw a light silk morning gown—light, in-

deed, as gossamer: this he tied loosely at the neck, and then sticking his toes into a pair of yellow slippers, began walking backward and forward between the window and door, both of which were thrown open to admit the air. The window looked into the street; the door opened into a wide hall, with dormitories on either side. While thus cooling himself in the breeze, which swept his loose drapery from side to side, he suddenly turned to me and inquired whether I was fond of *music*. I answered, of course, in the affirmative. When, without further ceremony, he opened a long case filled with musical instruments of various kinds, and asked me which I preferred. I could hardly believe it possible that he really meant to exercise his musical talents on that day of the week; but being a little curious, and, I must confess, a little mischievous at the same time, I pointed to the *violin*, which he immediately took out, and began to twang and tune. The discharge of a 12-pounder in the hall, would not have set the house in greater commotion. The first scrape of the bow brought half a dozen chambermaids to the door; who, catching sight of monsieur's bare legs, &c., ran down stairs, and reported that there was a frenchman fiddling in the chambers, *stark naked!* By this time, my



friend Garrot had got fairly-a-going; and, with his head inclined to one shoulder, and his eye turned upwards, stalked up and down the room, fiddling as if the devil, together with Apollo and the whole nine, were in him. The figure he cut was so ridiculous, that I thought I should have died in the effort to suppress my laughter.

In less than five minutes from the time he began, it appeared to me that not less than five hundred heads had passed the door, each one catching something more than a glimpse of monsieur's fine form. The wind seemed to increase with the music, and the stride of the performer became more lofty and majestic. At every turn the morning gown filled and swelled with the breeze—now waving and flapping in the cross current, and now extending out, as it were, upon a taught bowline. The hall was literally crowded with spectators, and the several questions *Who is he? Where did he come from? Is he mad?* were whispered in rapid succession. But Monsieur Garrot saw nothing but the ceiling of his room—heard nothing but the clarion voice of his own fiddle.

I was amazed at his abstraction—at his enthusiasm; and yet found it difficult to prevent myself from laughing aloud. He fiddled with

such force and energy, that his elbow seemed to move like a whipsaw driven by steam. I had no idea that 'twas in the power of a single instrument to produce such a tumult of sounds.

The *Battle of Prague*, roared from ten "forty piazzas" (as Johnny Robinson used to call them) would be a mere tinkling, compared with this uproar of Mr. Garrot's fiddle. I could not but confess, that in variety, force and compass, he surpassed even my old friend Mr. Giles. This is no light compliment. A greater, indeed, could not in sincerity be paid to the most celebrated performer.

But Mr. Gregory, at length, made his appearance, and as he worked his way through the crowd at the door, I could perceive that he was not only angry, but a little frightened. He was about to speak to Mr. Garrot, but Mr. Garrot was too much engaged to take the least notice of him; he therefore addressed himself to me, and and said—"For God's sake, Mr. Jones, what is the meaning of all this?" I was so full of laughter that I could not speak, and of course said nothing. He then turned to Mr. Garrot, and raised his hand as a sign for him to stop. Now, Mr. Gregory had no more the appearance of an inkeeper than he had of an emperor. It

was natural, therefore, that the frenchman should consider him as an intruder, and order him out of the room; which he did. But 'twas in french, which he perceived Mr. Gregory did not understand. He therefore collected all the english he was master of, and exclaimed, in an offended tone—"Vat you vont?" Mr. Gregory was about to reply, when monsieur, waving his hand, cried "Go vay! go vay!" and thereupon commenced fiddling fiercer than ever. This produced a universal burst of laughter; and so loud and long was the peal, (in which I was compelled to join,) that monsieur paused, and seemed now, for the first time, to be sensible that there was an unusual collection in the hall, and that something was wrong somewhere.

The scene at this moment was picturesque in the highest degree. There stood Mr. Garrot, in the middle of the room, with his fiddle in his hand; his pantaloons hanging upon a chair, and his morning gown floating behind him; looking first at Mr. Gregory, then at me, then at the cluster of heads at the door, utterly at a loss to to know what it all meant. There stood Mr. Gregory, too, in his neat drab-colored coat and Sunday inexpressibles, the very impersonation of order, decency and decorum, looking at the

brawney, half naked frenchman, with wonder and surprise. There, too, was the crowd of curious faces, male and female, peering in at the hall door; exhibiting every variety of expression, from the most serious to the most comic; all staring in profound silence, at the frenchman and his fiddle. It was ridiculous enough; and had it continued a moment longer, it would have been discreditable too. At my suggestion, Mr. Gregory left the room. I then closed the door, and endeavored to explain to Mr. Garrot the cause of the collection in the hall, and the motives of the individual who had interrupted him, But I found it difficult to make him comprehend it; for I was not a little puzzled myself to shape the matter in such a way as to render the explanation *satisfactory*, as well as plausible. At length he *seemed* to understand it; and taking out his tablets, wrote down what I suppose he considered *the substance of my explanation*, and then handed it to me to read. It ran thus:—  
“Americans have very little taste for music, and never listen with pleasure to the violin on Sundays, *except in church!*”

’Tis very well, said I, monsieur; ’tis very well.

Half an hour afterwards, we walked deliberately down stairs, and took our seats at the tea

table, as carelessly and as composedly, as if nothing had happened. But I observed, what Monsieur Garrot probably did not, that every eye in the room was occasionally turned upon him. Though in one sense the author of the mischief, and certainly the most censurable of the two, yet I received the thanks of Mr. Gregory, for having put an end to the confusion occasioned by the musical taste of Monsieur Garrot.

---

In looking back to the period of 1801, nothing impresses itself upon my mind more forcibly, than the degeneracy of the race of great men. What a difference between the leading politicians of that day and this! between Thomas Jefferson, for instance, and John Tyler! If we continue to go down hill at this rate, where, I would ask, shall we be likely to find ourselves at the end of the next half century?

But this is leading us off the track: let us go back to the Tontine. It is near the breakfast hour and the city boarders, I perceive, are already dropping in. That well-dressed, handsome-faced gentleman standing upon the stoop, with his hat under his arm and a ratan in his hand, is Mr. James Kane, of whom you have heard me speak

so frequently. The tall, spare man, with whom he is conversing, is Mr. Walter Clark, a merchant of the city, plain and simple in his character and manner, but polite and gentlemanly. The person that has just joined them, is an exceedingly clever man in his way—a little self-complacent, perhaps, but a gentleman and a wit: the latter he inherited, among other goods and chattels, from his father, who had a great deal more, by the by, than he bequeathed to any one. He is, as you perceive, extremely civil and polite; but it is rather because he deems it due to himself, than to others. His wit, though perfectly good-natured, is not scattered at random. It has its mark, and is always intended to tell. But notwithstanding this piquancy, and self appreciation, he is a clever companion, particularly over a bottle of good madeira. His fine rosy face shows this. In short, among the gentlemen of the Tontine, Mr. Caldwell holds no second rank.

That young man standing in the centre of the group on the left, is a Mr. —, somewhat remarkable for his flow of spirits and fluency of speech. He has acquired some reputation in the city, as a *business* man, and is quite a favorite with Mr. Kane. He is said to be something of a reader too, and, by the aid of a retentive me-

mory, sustains himself in the midst of a class of young men, much better educated than himself. He has a disposition to satire, which he frequently indulges at the expense of others, but without any taint of malignity. In his open and somewhat random mode of talking, he certainly says some things, and tells some truths, which it would be difficult for any other person to utter without giving offence. He has the advantage, too, of being older, if not abler, than he looks; and, under the guise of a frank and heedless manner, is keenly observant of the conduct and character of those around him. I have no doubt that he has, at this moment, in his portfolio, a full length portrait, not only of many of his personal friends and acquaintances, but of most of the distinguished men of the State. But he is no scholar, and cannot give to his sketches an abiding interest.

That plain but gentlemanly looking man, now talking with Mr. Kane, is Mr. Sedgwick, a member of the bar, and one of the most promising young men in the city. His character may be read in his countenance: in which, I think, you may also read that he is from Massachusetts. He brings with him the advantages of family reputation, character, and talents; and sustains

these antecedents by personal merit, purity of mind, and cleverness of manner. He is the professional partner of Mr. Harmanus Bleecker, a gentleman of sterling merit, and withal the best *dutch scholar* in the city.

By the by—but let us walk on—it has often occurred to me, that next to the good fortune of being born *white*, or, in other words, of *not* being born a squalid esquimaux on the frozen coast of Labrador, nor yet a woolly-pated negro, in the burning wilds of Senegambia—next, I repeat, to this good fortune, is that of having been born in a christian country, and of a *good family*. He that does not appreciate his escape from the wretched condition of savage life or slavish negroism, and is not impressed with the advantages of christian nativity and family distinction, has no sense of indebtedness to providence, or no feeling of gratitude in him. In using the term *good family*, I have no reference to wealth; for wealth, as we all know, is not only within the reach, but often in the possession of the meanest of mankind. A good family, in the ordinary sense of the phrase, is a family of good character, distinguished for talent or patriotism, or at least free from the touch or taint of dishonor. By way of illustration, permit me to say,



that had my ancestors, upon either side, been tories of the revolution, I should never have ventured to boast of my descent from a good family: on the contrary, I should have considered the toryism as a stain upon the family escutcheon, which it would require the patriotism of at least two generations to wipe out. But this, you will say, is a compound of pride and prejudice. It may be so; but the pride is of that species which has some dignity in it, and the prejudice is of that family of the plant which is worth cultivating.

PRIDE, my dear madam, is a more powerful passion of the mind than AMBITION itself. The one may lead us to seek the bubble reputation, even in the cannon's mouth; but the other crosses and controls the vicious impulses of our nature, steps in between the tempter and the crime, holds back the hand from the forbidden fruit, and balks the devil in his efforts to corrupt us.—Though in no degree allied to morality or principle, yet it often operates in conjunction with them, and not unfrequently supplies their total absence. It must be remembered that we are not all armed alike; and in this warfare with evil, it becomes us to make use of such arms as we possess.

But this is a digression—let us go back to our reminiscences,

### THE MARQUIS DU BARRAILLE.

Among other waifs upon the common of life, with which I came in contact in those days, was an old and veritable french Marquis, by the name of Du Barraille. He was one of those unfortunate loyalists who were driven into exile by the french revolution. He held the commission and rank of Colonel in the King's Guards, and had fled his country with nothing but loyalty in his head, and nothing but the order of St. Louis in his pocket. He had wandered through the West India Islands, thence through the Canadas, and finally found his way through Lake Champlain and the head waters of the Hudson, down to Albany. By this time, his resources were completely exhausted, every trinket had been put in requisition—his gold snuff box, his diamond ring, even his sword, as he said, had been pledged to the brokers or pawned to the Jews. The cross of St. Louis he had received from the hand of his royal master, and therefore could not part with it without dishonor. While in the West Indies, he had, probably with a view to mend

his fortunes, married the daughter of a wealthy planter; but owing to some eruption or revolution, the fortune was lost, and nothing remained on his arrival at Albany, save the aforesaid cross of St. Louis, Madame, and two children! The marquis was an educated, well bred, and gentlemanly man: familiar with english literature, and spoke the language sufficiently well. Madame could boast of none of these advantages. She was bred upon a plantation, and spoke no language but the creole. Yet she was a respectable and kind-hearted woman.

On ascertaining the character and circumstances of the marquis, the young gentlemen of the city came to his rescue. 'Twas evident that his only resourse was to open a school and teach the french language: this they advised; and to enable him to carry it into execution, hired a house, furnished it themselves, put him into it, and some eight or ten of them entered their names as pupils of the marquis, and boarders at the "Hotel Du Barraille." But with the exception of one or two, the study of the french language formed no part of their amusements. The principal object of the move, was to keep the marquis from starving, and in doing which they came pretty near starving themselves; for the marquis

had never been in the commissary department, and was rather an awkward sort of landlord. They stood it, however, about six months, and then broke up, paid the rent and tuition for the year, and returned to the Tontine, from whence they came, with as little *parlevous* in them as they had when they left it. Those six months, however, were by no means thrown away. They were, in fact, the most memorable in the annals of their lives: never before, were there so many events and circumstances, so much fun and frolic, so much poetry, music and eloquence, crowded into such a narrow space of time.—Every language was studied in the school but the french, and every art was practised in the kitchen but the art of cooking. If that which was contemplated was never done, much certainly was done that was never contemplated. But with all their whims and irregularities, the old marquis was proud of his pupils, and fond of their company; though he preferred claret, he had no particular antipathy to a glass of madeira. We had, of course, the history of the revolution over and over, with anecdotes of distinguished characters, civil and military. But what amused us most, was the gravity with which the Old Loyalist would talk of the “restoration of the

Bourbons." He spoke of it as though it was a matter of course, waiting only the destined hour. And all this too, at the very time when Napoleon was master of more than half of Europe; when thrones, and crowns, and principalities, and powers, were made and unmade by a dash of his pen, or the word of his mouth! We laughed in our sleeves at what we considered the old man's folly: and the "restoration of the Bourbons," became a jest and a bye word. And yet, "tell it not in Gath," the Bourbons were restored, and the old marquis, as he always believed he should, returned to France! But, before that joyous hour had arrived, his resources were exhausted and his fortunes had fallen to their lowest ebb. The greater part of his scholars had never entered his school room, and had now ceased to pay. The "Hotel Du Barraille" was of course abandoned, and he rented a small house in a cheap and dirty street in the purlieus of Fox creek.

Thither I followed him. For, amid the fun and frolic of the first six months, I had barely learned to read and translate the language. I now proposed to learn, if possible, to speak it: since I was now the only pupil, and the only boarder. The house was a wretched tenement; and the fare, I knew, would be still worse. My

bill of board and tuition was his only means of support. But madame was an able economist; and one piece of meat, generally, carried us through the week. The fare was arranged as follows: On *Monday*, we had the rib or joint, roasted; *Tuesday*, the remains of Monday were served up nearly as good as new; *Wednesday*, the fragments were converted into a most palatable hash; *Thursday*, the hash was warmed over; *Friday*, the bones furnished a rich soup; *Saturday*, the soup was warmed over; and on *Sunday*—I dined out—and the family had, what madame called, a picked up dinner, as she was religiously opposed to cooking much on that day.

The breakfast, in the natural order of things, should have been mentioned first. It consisted of coffee made of parched peas or oats, stale baker's bread, and one small scotch herring for each person. The herring was the life and soul of the meal. How often did I wish it had pleased the Marchioness or the Gods, to have allowed us *two* instead of *one*. But each made the most of the one he had. I used to begin at one end of mine, (it was immaterial which,) and grind it to powder, swallowing every particle, head and tail, bones, fins, gills and gizzard! Not one atom

was left to tell the story that a herring had ever touched my plate. No indigestion followed: no one, while boarding with the marquis, was ever troubled with the dyspepsia!

The tea was a dish of hot water colored with brown sugar, and a crust of dry bread without butter. Yet I never heard a complaint. On the contrary, I often complimented madame, myself, upon the richness of her coffee, and the fine flavor of her tea! Never, I believe, since the expulsion of Adam from the Garden of Eden—never, I am certain, since the children of Israel fed upon manna in the wilderness, did a family live at so little expense, and at the same time make so respectable a show.

The old marquis himself, though his whole wardrobe would not have sold for five shillings, appeared to be dressed in the style of a french nobleman, so well did any thing and every thing become him. Kate, a very pretty American girl not over sixteen years of age, was his cook and laundress, his steward, butler, barber, chambermaid and footman! A single room, of about twelve by sixteen, served the whole family, myself excepted, for a kitchen, sitting-room, wash-room and bed-room. Yes, in that room of all rooms, in which the washing, cooking and dress-

ing was done, slept the marquis, madame, two children, Kate and Cæsar! Cæsar, by the by, was the marquis's dog; and a more loyal brute never lived. Like the marquis, he had the politesse, the air and dignity of the ancient *régime*. The marchioness never dined with the family, except on Sunday, when there was no company, and nothing to eat: but at breakfast and at tea, she made her appearance in a style that would have astonished the mother of mankind. The marquis, too, always came forth, fresh as a bridegroom; his boots neatly polished, his hair powdered, his coat brushed and buttoned, and his hat under his arm, both (marquis and hat) looking as good as new. Knowing, as I could not but know, the character and condition of the apartment from which they issued, it was difficult to conceive by what means such neatness and elegance of appearance could be so suddenly produced. On questioning Kate about the matter, she confessed that 'twas the work of her own hands: that she polished the boots with the end of a candle; and that the powder with which she dusted the Marquis's head, was nothing but indian meal; that she brushed the coat, rubbed the buttons, and fixed the cravat; and then adjusted the ruffles of madame. But enough of this.



I continued to reside in the family for more than six months, in despite of the unpleasant location, the wretched apartments and meagre fare. The thin oat coffee and spare diet, however, were favorable to the studies I pursued; and I therefore particularly recommend them to those who wish to acquire a just knowledge of human nature, or a correct pronounciation of the french language.

I now present the reader with the history of the last night I passed under the roof of the old marquis, in this his last place of residence in the city of Albany.

---

### THE LAST NIGHT.

It was late in the evening before I left the marquis's little room below, and retired to my own. I had been listening, as usual, to the tales of the revolution, and the sufferings of the emigrants, and felt no disposition to sleep. The day had been extremely hot, and the air was close and sultry. On opening my window, I perceived that a thunderstorm was gathering in the west, and concluded to sit up till 'twas over. In the meantime I amused myself by translating passages from the *Henriad*, and trying my hand at turning

them into english verse. While thus engaged, I was startled by an unusual noise and agitation below. I could distinctly hear the voice of the marquis, and the hasty tread of feet passing from one room to another. I was aware that the youngest child, a boy of about four years of age, had been unwell for some time; but as no idea had been entertained that he was in any immediate danger, I concluded that some accident had happened, or that some disturbance had taken place in the street. But in less than a minute came a shriek from the marchioness, accompanied by the terrifying exclamation of "Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" I seized the light, and placing it at the head of the stairs, hurried down. The doors were all open; and on entering the room, I was shocked at the spectacle it presented. There was madame with her clothes half torn off her back—still raving and tearing the hair from her head. The old marquis was walking about the room, half distracted, wringing his hands, and ejaculating "Mon pauvre Louis! Mon pauvre Louis!" Poor Kate sat by the cradle, crying and sobbing as if her heart would break. I said a few words to the marquis, and endeavored to express my sympathy to madame; but words were vain, and sympathy, though recognized, was unavailing.

I walked fearfully to the cradle. It was too true: all was over; the child had breathed its last. Its look was awful. It lay almost entirely naked, with its eyes unclosed. After gazing upon it for a few moments, I turned to leave the room, for the scene was too painful to bear. At that moment there came a flash of lightning, followed by a clap of thunder, which shook the house to its very foundation. Kate turned pale. The words "Mon Dieu!" were repeated in a fearful tone by more than one voice. Even old Cæsar crawled out from under the table, and seating himself upon his hind legs, pointed his nose up into the air, and gave one of the most prolonged and mournful howls that I had ever heard. It was with the greatest difficulty that I could keep my nerves steady. I would have given a kingdom, if I had had one, to have been ten miles off. I, however, left the room slowly, and had but just regained my chamber, when a large cat, with eyes as big as saucers, poked her head into the room, and looking me wildly in the face, gave one of the most infernal *yowls* that was ever heard by mortal ears! Where the devil she came from, nobody knew. This brought old Cæsar out again, and another howl was set up: another flash of lightning, and another peal of thunder followed.

Father Abraham! said I. But my imagination was getting wild. I began to look upon it as the last night, or as the foreshadowing type of the last day! Gradually, however, the Heavens became more quiet, and the sounds of woe less and less audible. At length the morning broke: the sun came forth in the east; and the world was again radiant with light, and life, and beauty.

I gave Kate some necessary instructions, and leaving the house buried in profound repose, walked deliberately down to the Tontine: not exactly, however, in that mood of mind in which Adam left the gates of paradise; nor with the lingering step and backward look with which Lot's wife left the rich city that adorned the fruitful plain of the Pentapolis, but with the returning buoyancy of one whose spirits had been depressed by a gloomy tempest and a night of horrors.

A few years afterwards I received a letter from the old marquis, dated in PARIS. But his long cherished dream of restoration to rank, friends and fortune, was never realized. The revolution had engulfed all but the memory of the past, and he literally found himself a stranger in the land of his birth.

---

Some people seem to imagine that all man-

kind are alike. They see no difference,—and by way of proof that there is none, they will tell you that every individual of the species (unless he has lived in Mississippi) has two eyes: and unless he has been in the wars, or on a rail road, has two arms and two legs. Beyond these fixtures and appendages they never look, never inquire. They note no discrepancies, no peculiarities, no quips of the imagination, no crotchets of the mind; and they actually go through life without ever seeing any thing remarkable.

Others again, though fewer in number, are forever on the lookout for novelties and diversities,—for the odd, the eccentric, the ludicrous; and are singularly successful in discovering singular forms and combinations—peculiar habits, looks, actions and traits of character. With *them*, no two things under heaven are alike—no two men bear any resemblance to each other, or to any body else.

To which of these two classes the writer of these reminiscences belongs, I leave to the reader to decide.

---

Among other curious subjects that attracted my attention during the early part of my residence in Albany, was a blind old man led about the streets by his colored servant. It was

## OLD MR. BANYAR.

A most intelligent, wealthy, and respectable old gentleman. He was the most perfect type of the *Anglo-American* then living. He was the last of a race, or class of men, now totally extinct—a race, born in England, grown rich in America, proud of their birth, and prouder of their fortune.

He had been a secretary of state under the colonial government, and at the breaking out of the war of the revolution, very naturally, and the prospect considered, very wisely, took sides (but not arms) with the mother country. He was a royalist in feeling, and doubtless in principle—the *feeling*, it is believed, underwent no change; the *principle*, in the course of time, became temperately, and I may add, judiciously, modified by his interests. He had, while in his office of secretary, obtained from the crown many large and valuable tracts of land. These lands were the sources of his wealth. With the eye of intelligence, sharpened by the peculiarity of his position, he watched the course of events, and like a skilful pilot, steered between the extremes. He wisely kept a friend in either port, and had always an anchor out to windward. In short, he preserved his character from reproach, on the other side of the

water, and *his lands from confiscation* on this. His mind kept pace with the intelligence of the age. He became an American when America became triumphant,—thought better of republicanism as it approximated to power: and finally, without abating one jot of his love for the land of his birth, came quietly into our political arena under the banner of Mr. Jefferson! In all this, he acted, as we think, wisely and prudently. He was no American at the commencement of the war, but an Englishman, born and bred, with the badges of office and of confidence still in his possession. Yet he took no part—gave no aid, and but little comfort to the enemy, for when secretly applied to for advice, he sent by the messenger a basket of fruit—and when for *information*, the return was a basket of eggs! He was, therefore, no *tory*, but merely a judicious politician: in which character, if he acquired no *fame*, he at least preserved his reputation and his *property*, and merited the thanks of those remembered in his will.

He must have been somewhere about three score and ten years of age when I first saw him in the streets of Albany. He was a short, stout built man, English alike in form, in character, and in aspect: and at the period to which I refer, infirm, gouty, and nearly blind; but still sound

in mind and venerable in appearance. The colored servant by whom he was led, was no unimportant personage. He was his man-friday—his man Peter—his all in all—for without his aid, locomotion was impossible. What was not a little remarkable, was the fact, that Peter resembled his master in almost every particular, save his gout and his blindness. He was of the same height and make, as well dressed, nearly as old, and quite as grey. He was, moreover, as independent, as important and as irritable. At a little distance, it was indeed difficult to tell which was master and which was man.

Nothing could be more amusing than their conversation and disputes when moving together, arm in arm, down Pearl-street and across State, to Lewis's tavern,—a haunt, to which they resorted daily, whenever the weather would permit. It was indeed the haunt of a good many other distinguished individuals of those days. All the quid nuncs, news mongers, segar smokers, and back-gammon players, together with a long list of worthies, who were constitutionally thirsty between twelve and one o'clock, made Lewis's their head quarters. Could the old gentleman have seen all the company there assembled, listened to their language, and witnessed their



libations at the bar, he would probably have relished their society something less than he did.

But, be that as it may—in his frequent peregrinations to and from that celebrated tavern, it was my special pleasure (boy like) to throw myself a few paces in his rear, and listen to the dialogue that was sure to take place between him and his man Peter. It was generally in a pretty sharp tone of voice, and almost always upon a disputacious key. In crossing State-street one day, on their return from Lewis's, it commenced thus:—Peter, said the old man, you're leading me into the mud. There's no mud here, says Peter. But I say there is, retorted the old man fiercely. I say there aint, said Peter. D—n it, sir, said the old man, giving his arm a twitch and coming to a full halt, don't you suppose I know the nature of the ground on which I stand? No, says Peter, don't spose you know any such thing; you ony stept one foot off the stones, that's all. Well, well, come along then; what do you keep me standing here in the street for? I don't keep you, said Peter; you keep yourself. Well, well, come along, said the old man, and let me know when I come to the gutter. You are in the gutter now, said Peter. The devil I am! said the old man; then pausing a moment,

he added, in a sort of moralizing tone, there's a worse gutter than this to cross, I can tell you, Peter. If there be, said Peter, I should like to know where 'tis; I have seen, continued Peter, every gutter in town, from the ferry stairs to the Patroons, and there aint a worse one among 'em all. But the gutter I mean, said the old gentleman in a lower tone, is one which you *cross in a boat*, Peter. 'Tis strange, said Peter, that I should never have found it out;—now, lift your foot higher, or you'll hit the curb stone,—cross a gutter in a boat! ejaculated Peter, 'tis nonsense. 'Tis so written down, said the old man. *Written down*, said Peter; the newspapers may write what they please, but I don't believe a word on't. I'm thinking said the old man, they put too much brandy in their toddy there at Lewis's. I thought so too, said Peter, when you were getting off the steps at the door; and since you've mentioned that boat, I'm sure of it. What is that you say? said the old man, coming to a halt again, and squaring himself round; you thought so, did you? what right had you to think any thing about it? I tell you, Peter, you are a fool!

The attitude and appearance of the parties at this moment was so whimsical—in fact, so ridiculous, that I could not restrain myself from

laughing aloud. Who is that? said the old man, taking quietly hold of Peter's arm again. Don't know him, said Peter; spose he's one of the *new comers*. New comers! said the old man, repeating the phrase. Is he old or young, Peter? Young, said Peter. Then *I forgive him*, said the old man; and after a short pause, added in a lower tone of voice, *may he never know the misfortune of blindness or the gout*. Never in the course of my life did I feel so ashamed of myself as at that moment. A blow from a cane could not have hurt me half as much. My first thought was to walk directly up to him, take him by the hand and make him an ample apology. But to entertain a just sense of what we ought to do, is one thing—to do it, quite another. In the present case, I was apprehensive that my apology might not be accepted; besides, it was not at his infirmities I laughed, but at the singular oddity of the scene. I imagined, moreover, that Jeremiah himself, had he been present, would have laughed at the ridiculous dialogue and still more ridiculous attitudes of the parties.

It is impossible, I think, to reflect one moment upon the position which Mr. Banyar occupied during the war of the revolution, and the manner in which he sustained himself in it, without

conceding to him a thorough knowledge of the world, great sagacity and great address. It is said by those who knew him personally, that his manners were those of a gentleman, and that he possessed no ordinary share of talent and of wit.

Among other curious things that attracted my attention in the ancient city of Albany, just prior to the extinction of the dutch dynasty, was the disproportionate number of old people. Pearl-street in particular, was lined with these remnants of the olden days. The population of the city was evidently undergoing a thorough revolution. One whole generation—nay, one *whole race*, was then on the very eve of passing away, while another, of an entirely different character and aspect was coming in. But the most attractive pictures to my eye, were the aged members of the retiring race.

Could Solomon have paid a visit to Albany in 1803 or 4, he would have acknowledged (notwithstanding his former assertion to the contrary,) that there were many things “new under the sun.” He would, I think, have found something to admire as *new* and *original*, even in the antique though unclassic model of

## OLD MR. LYDIUS.

This old gentleman, if tradition may be relied on, was something of a lion in his day. He was unusually tall, raw-boned, and of a most forbidding aspect—singular in his habits, and eccentric in his character—but independent, honest, and gruff as a bear. He occupied at the commencement of the present century, the old, and somewhat mysterious looking mansion, then standing at the south-east corner of North Pearl and State-street: and was of course next door neighbor, in an easterly line, to the old elm tree. The house exhibited in its style and order the taste if not the pride of its proprietor. Its position admitted of *two* front gables, and two front gables it had; thus rivaling, if not excelling in architectural dignity, the celebrated mansion of the Van der Heyden family. One front rested on Pearl, the other on State. Each had its full complement of *outside* decorative adjuncts—namely, long spouts from the eaves, little benches at the door, iron figures on the wall, and a rooster on the gable head. How the *inside* was contrived, nobody knew. The only inhabitants, or at least the only ones that my curiosity could ever discover, were the dark and indomitable proprietor, and an old, unmutilated,

pale-faced, melancholy-looking cat. Nor were these visible to any human eye except at particular hours, or under peculiar circumstances.

At the dusky hour of eve, or in the misty gray of the morning, the head, or what was taken to be the head, of the old man, was sometimes seen peering out of the narrow window in the southern front; while the low, complaining voice of the other inhabitant (when darkness covered the land,) might be distinctly heard from the turret of the western wing. No door was ever seen to open—no twinkling light gave sign of life within. Even in the day time, its dreary aspect conjured up the idea of trap-doors and dungeons. At night, I never passed it without quickening my pace and looking sharply about me. Yet from the tax gatherer I learned that Mr. Lydius was a man of property; and the corporation, as a testimonial of his virtues, caused his name to be painted on a little board and fastened up at the corner of a street in the southern section of the city.

It is not improbable that his shade is at this moment wandering along the sea-resounding dikes in the land of his ancestors—the once proud and heroic Holland!

## THE VISIT.

Nothing could have been more appropriate than the christian name given to these reminiscences, since it authorizes the writer to go backward or forward, up or down, to the right or left, whichever way the capriciousness of memory may incline. It relieves him, moreover, from the necessity of observing the chronological order of events, or of paying indeed any sort of regard to *time*, other than to keep within the limits prescribed,—namely—the first eight years of the nineteenth century.

Passing down North Pearl-street, the next day after my arrival in the city, in company with my friend, Col. Elisha Jenkins, (with whom I had been examining the topography, antiquities and architectural curiosities of the town,) he proposed to call and see an old friend of his, whose name I have forgotten, but whose residence I remember was on the left hand side, two or three blocks from State-street. It was to my eye at least, a queer looking mansion. It had all the venerable marks of age, and many of the emblems of Amsterdam stamped upon its face. On entering, we were conducted by a colored female servant through a long, dark and narrow hall, into a dimly lighted room in the rear. The host struck me as somewhat typical

of the mansion. He was an aged gentleman, with the fashions of other days sufficiently apparent in his dress and address. He was seated in a huge arm chair, with a red worsted cap on his head, a long loose gown or robe, coming down to his ancles, silver buckles in his shoes, and one foot swathed in flannel resting upon a stool.

Though frank and courteous in his manner, there was yet an air of consequential dignity about him, and a tone of authority in his voice, which would have suited the character of Henry VIII. He would indeed have furnished an excellent subject for the pencil of Hans Holbein. The furred robe, the buckles and the red cap, would have made a figure in one of Hans's pictures.

There were several gentlemen in the room at the time of our entrance, and one or two more dropped in afterwards. The principal subject of conversation was politics, and I soon perceived they were all thorough going Jeffersonians. The recent triumph of their party had put them in high spirits. But I was particularly struck with the tone and manner of the old gentleman. I had never before witnessed so much freedom and hilarity tempered with so much courtesy. Being a mere lad at the time, I had of course remained silent. The old gentleman perceiving this, turned



to me and said, well, my young friend, which side are you? I answered that I was not much of a politician, but had made up my mind to go with the majority. Ah, ha, said he, older heads than yours have wisely made up their minds to pursue the same course. This I thought rather a hit at my friend Col. Jenkins, who had but recently joined the dominant party. The old man now turned to a tall, quiet sort of personage, who had taken no part in the conversation, and said in a loud but familiar tone, Peter, Peter, we are becoming rather dry, make us, I pray you, something to drink, Peter. Peter retired, and in a few minutes returned with a glass pitcher, (or rather a sort of two quart tumbler with a handle to it,) filled to the brim, which he handed to the old gentleman first, who had no sooner taken a swallow of it than he called out, Ah, Peter, Peter, you have made this *pretty well to the north*, I can tell you; but hand it round, Peter, hand it round; and round it went, each one taking a hearty pull at it. When it came to my turn, it did not pass untasted, for I was curious to know what it was made of; so I took a tiff by way of gaining knowledge, as Eve took the apple. I found it a sort of spiced and sugared grog, or what, I believe, the learned in such matters would call *Rum Toddy*.

This was the first time I had ever seen a company of gentlemen drink out of the same cup. It was the first time, too, that I had ever heard the phrase of "too far to the north" used as a substitute for the words *too strong*.

But I was in a new latitude, and almost every thing I heard or saw, was new to me. The old house, the dark and narrow hall, the singular appearance of the aged host, the red cap and silver buckles, the two quart tumbler, and even the *grog itself*, was new to me.

The whole scene was many years afterwards brought freshly to my mind by reading Hallock's song in praise of the beer and the Bucktails of Tammany Hall.

I shall certainly be excused for inserting, as a fitting close to this article, one stanza of that memorable jeu d'sprit.

"That beer and those Bucktails I ne'er shall forget,  
But oft when alone and unnoticed by all,  
I shall think, is the porter cask foaming there yet?  
Are the Bucktails still swigging in Tammany Hall?"

---

## FRENCH POLITENESS.

In the course of one of our evening conversations the old marquis remarked that the English, as a nation, had no just notions of politeness: and this he attributed to the all-pervading influ-

ence of the mercantile and trading character of the people. The Americans, he said, though more civil than the English, imitated or adopted their forms and ceremonies. In France no *gentleman* addressed another with his hat on, whether indoors or out. In America, as in England, you *touch the hat*, instead of *uncovering*, as true politeness dictates. This, said he, is never seen in France, except in the army, and even there the practice is confined to subalterns. But in cold and stormy weather, said I, inquiringly. 'Tis all the same, continued the marquis, politeness is a *code* by which we regulate our conduct, and has nothing to do with the weather. It takes no lessons from convenience. It cannot be changed or modified by any external circumstance. 'Tis very well, said I to myself, we shall see how the thing will work. I shall avail myself of the first opportunity to test the theory of this polite code by reducing it to practice.

Not long after, in passing down State-street in the midst of a violent snow storm, I saw at some distance ahead, the tall form of the old marquis, slowly approaching in a zig-zag line, — the snow driving so furiously in his face as to oblige him every now and then to tack and veer a little from his direct course, to enable him to take breath.

Now, said I, is the time, and this the fitting occasion, to test the virtue of that polite code, of which the old gentleman was so recently speaking. Accordingly, before we came within ten yards of each other, I pulled off my hat with an air of politeness seldom witnessed in northern latitudes. The old marquis recognized the signal, and doffed his beaver at the same moment. As we met, we came of course to a full stop — both *uncovered*, as the code of politeness dictated. Fortunately, neither of us had an umbrella — and the total absence of any sort of protection against the elements, rendered our courtesy more conspicuous. In our salutations and greetings, we went deliberately through all the forms — shaking hands with the utmost politeness and cordiality, bowing right and left at the same time, with many very *sincere* assurances of pleasure at the happy meeting. I made a point of honor to be particularly deliberate in my compliments and enquiries — Madame, the children, Kate and Cæsar, were all duly remembered. But no remark about the weather escaped either of us. The weather had nothing to do with the code, and we had nothing to do with the weather. People in the mean time were looking out of their shop windows at us, and watching our polite ceremonies with perfect

astonishment. But there we stood, in the midst of the drifting snow, as unconcerned as if it had been a summer's morning, bowing and scraping, with our eyes and ears filled with the drift, and our hair frozen into wisps and whistling in the wind. But we paid no attention to such small matters, nor to the people in the shops, who from the very politeness of our movements began seriously to suspect that we were in reality cracked: for the Albanians, being mostly dutch, had in truth but little better notions of politeness than the English themselves. After a while, however, —after having exhausted the whole budget of compliments and talked over the news of the day; after having touched upon the prolific topic of “Buonaparte and the Bourbons,” and discussed the merits of French and English literature, Pope, Boileau, Fenelon, Massillon and Moliere, we prepared to take leave; and having made our several bows and congés, we thumped the snow out of our hats, and repeating the usual parting phrase, “au plaisir, monsieur,” without further ceremony, separated, and resumed our respective courses — I, scudding before the gale under bare poles down the street, the old marquis, brailed and buttoned to the chin, beating slowly to windward up the hill!

Though the old gentleman, during the *tete a tete*,

suffered no sign of impatience to escape him, yet I strongly suspect he must have wished the whole theory of civilization, the special code, and his polite pupil, to the devil, forty times over, before we parted !

---

### THE MARQUIS'S PUPILS.

It was reasonably to have been expected, that before closing these reminiscences I should give some further account of the young gentlemen who, under the pretext of studying french, but in reality from motives of charity and the novelty of the thing, became pupils of the marquis, and boarders at the Hotel Du Barraille. It was my intention to give a full length portrait of each and every member of that celebrated school, but upon reflection, it would occupy more time than I can now spare, and more space than my present canvass will admit. Besides, the time has gone by, when such an exhibition would be interesting. Many of them have long since passed away, and few remain, to whom their features would be familiar. The light that shone in their chambers, is extinguished — their halls are desolate — their dwellings are dark ! I shall therefore content myself by collecting a few loose stones to set up

in this place (after the manner of the patriarchs of old,) as a memorial of their good-fellowship, and as a testimony to their whimsicalities forever! In other words, I shall furnish the reader with a brief compilation of their personal peculiarities, tastes, talents and acquirements: and if this should fail to perpetuate their memories, it will be the fault of the compiler, and not of the materials from which it is compiled.

Their names on the muster roll of the school were ranged in alphabetical order, and by a singular coincidence, their talents were found to correspond with their rank or position on the roll—descending the lettered ladder by regular gradation, from A to K, inclusive. I shall speak of them in the same order, and as briefly as is compatible with the courtesy due to old acquaintance, or as may be consistent with a just enumeration of their various qualities.

Mr. A. was a good English scholar, had a smattering of latin, was master of the french and familiar with all its dialects—patois, creole and Canadian. Wrote poetry, read german, and spoke dutch. Was a good sailor, skilled in nautical lore and learned in its technicalities—understood the theory of gun boats as well as Mr. Jefferson himself, and could manage a canoe to perfection. He

was a skilful angler, full of piscatory science, and familiar with all its tackling — poles and hooks and flies! He had a taste for drawing and painting — knew Shakspeare by heart — studied medicine, read the psalms, and played upon the fiddle. He was moreover a great sportsman and a capital shot — knew all about double barrel and single barrel, in cover or on the wing. Knew the habits of all sorts of game — wild goose, duck, plover, woodcock, snipe, hedge hog, fox and bear. Knew all the points of a horse, and spoke the classic language of the turf as fluently as his mother tongue. Was fond of dogs (as dogs were of him) but detested puppies. He was also a perfect “master of fence” — broad sword, small sword, quarter staff and cudgel. Knew something of mathematics and something of music — was a great mimic, a great quiz and could tell a story better than any other man living. In addition to these few particulars, I may add, that he was a gentleman in every aspect — in feeling, address and manner — that he always walked with a cane, and was always accompanied by *Sweetheart*, *Blanche* and *Tray*.

Mr. B. understood men and things in general, and politicians in particular, better than any other member of the club. He was something of a



writer and something of a reader. He had a taste for satire, a great flow of animal spirits, some wit and a good memory. Was fond of poetry, music, fun, trigonometry and backgammon. Was a great talker, but talked well. A good listener, but impatient of folly. His strength lay in his good sense, — his weakness in an undue fondness for poetry. He was a good judge of character, and knew every body's weak side but his own. He was in short a man of business with a literary taste, — uneducated, but well read — quick in his perceptions, just in his conclusions, ready, apt, and of a lively imagination.

Mr. C. was a hard student, well educated, well informed — had a full share of common sense, but no wit, no tact, no taste — was no lover of music or of poetry. Had no objection to *fun*, provided the unities of *time* and *place* were observed. His knowledge was respectable, sound, useful. He belonged to the school of utilitarians — out of that pale he never travelled but against his will. He was fond of argument and a good dinner, of lobsters, logic, and law. He loved prudence, économy, new cider, green peas, and a beef steak garnished with onions. On the other hand, he had an unconquerable dislike to a tailor's bill, a beggar, and a cat! He was, however, a reliable

man, punctual, regular, methodical, and as upright as a doric column.

Mr. D. was perhaps the best educated, certainly the most accomplished of all the marquis's scholars. He had, moreover, the reputation of being the handsomest man in the city. He had a fine face, a fine tone of voice, an admirable form, agreeable manners, an easy lounging gait, and great good humour. He dressed well, danced well, was particularly fond of music, and though he could not distinguish one tune from another, was capital in a chorus. He was somewhat indolent, but good hearted, liberal, unaffected, and unpretending. He gave himself but little concern about the ordinary concerns of life, and with the *extraordinary* he had nothing to do.

He was fresh from College, and of course profoundly read and liberally learned. He knew the first three lines of Virgil by heart—knew something of Cornelius Nepos, and something of Cæsar. Had heard of Demosthenes, of Homer and Herodotus, perhaps of Xenophon and Xerxes, of Plato, and of Plutarch. But the ancients did not, I believe, occupy all his thoughts—he loved the younger and the gayer world. He loved wit, he loved music, and what is more to the purpose, he loved *fun* in all its endless varieties, forms and

phases: And to this last article he contributed his full share; he added largely to its capital stock, and still more liberally to its circulation.

Mr. E. was one of those polite and quiet men who win their way by gentleness, rather than by force. What others claimed as a matter of right, he received as a special favor. Though uninitiated in party politics, and indifferent to the rule by which the right is determined, he nevertheless went with the majority. He was always with the many, never with the few. He admired power, strength, wealth, dress, fashion, taste and show. He paid the profoundest deference and respect to men in high stations, and wisely measured their talents by their rank. His knowledge was rather exact than extensive, but his good nature, politeness and courtesy, knew no bounds. His colloquial powers were not great, but he was an excellent listener, and laughed at every joke, whether he understood it or not. He took no part in any sharp discussion, trod upon no man's toes, and differed with no man in opinion, at least not audibly. He sung a good song, took lessons in dancing, wore kid gloves, and played upon the flute. With such a happy temper of mind, and such amiable qualities, it would be needless to say that he was a universal favorite.

Though there was much in the character of Mr. E. to which a proud mind would object, yet I must confess that I looked upon it with some degree of admiration, and occasionally with a feeling bordering upon envy. He was certainly the most amiable, and by far the most popular man in the club.

Mr. F. made no pretensions to scholarship of any kind. He knew nothing of greek, latin, french or german. He had read but little beyond the pentateuch, day book and ledger. But he had good sense, good nature, and mother wit in abundance. It may easily be imagined that he had no taste for poetry and no skill in music. Yet, like Mr. D. his voice was admirable in a chorus. He borrowed nothing from others, nothing from books. His powers and resources were all his own. He uttered nothing that smelt of the lamp—though it sometimes had the flavor of the shop. Ease, humour, drollery, a love of wit and a love of *fun*, characterized his social intercourse. He was perpetually saying good things, and sometimes, I used to think, without knowing it. He was in short not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others. A better hearted man never lived.

Mr. G. was in one sense, *the lion of the club*. He was, indeed, one of a thousand! in other

words, a most singular character, a most perfect original. He possessed one quality, one single trait, composed partly of mind and partly of manner, which, like Aaron's rod, swallowed up all the rest. It was *assurance* — or, more correctly speaking, *impudence!* which, but for its unbounded excess, would have been offensive, if not intolerable. It was neither. It was indeed so striking, so transcendental, as seemingly to partake of the character of genius. It seemed, in him, to lose the vulgarity of its nature and to operate like wit. Its exhibition was indeed almost always followed by a roar of laughter.

The voice, the eye, the whole face, indeed the *whole man*, was the expressive type of cold, impassive, unabashed and unabashable impudence. Yet it had weight, it had character, it had influence. It was surprising, astonishing, amusing. Notwithstanding the absurdity of the assertion, proposition or speech, in which this peculiar trait was embodied, it was so strengthened and sustained by the air of confidence with which it was uttered, that you were led to doubt for a moment the correctness of your own conclusions, thinking it possible there might be in it something more than appeared upon the face of the record.

He was not, however, altogether destitute of

other and more agreeable qualities, but they were lost in the blaze of the virtue we have attempted to describe. He was rather good natured than otherwise, full of crotchets and inventions provocative of mirth, and to one who sought amusement only, was an agreeable companion.

He had received a College education and could — write his name !

Mr. H. was a gentleman in every respect, but without any strong points of character, peculiarities, faults or follies. He played an excellent game of whist, talked to his horse, read Ossian and the Canticles, loved music, and entered cordially into all the amusements of the club.

Mr. I. was placed by ballot at the head of the table as carver and master of ceremonies, which station (particularly when there was no company present and the principal dish was a cutlet of liver or a bowl of soup,) he filled with distinguished ability.

Mr. K. the last name upon the muster roll of the school—the least and the humblest, I shall leave to the imagination of the reader. It does not become me to draw my own portrait.

Now, it would be doing great injustice to the marquis's pupils, to dismiss them with such a bare and skeleton-like enumeration of their tastes

and qualities, as is presented in the foregoing sketches. From such loose outlines and unconnected details, their real characters cannot justly be inferred. The union of such elements might or might not have been favorable. The moral aspect, the combined influence, the general result, is still wanting. That result, in my judgment, was highly creditable.

That there was much social freedom, wild wit, humor, song and youthful jolity among them, I readily admit: but there was a counterpoise to this—there was something higher and better. There was a high sense of honor, a pride of character, — ambition, emulation, and effort. There was much close and varied reading, much laborious study. More than one language was cultivated, more than one species of knowledge acquired. Composition was practiced, and poetry studied as an art—the latter was indeed assiduously cultivated as a vehicle of satire and of wit. A sufficient knowledge of french was obtained, by those who pursued the study, to read and translate it with ease. To *speak it*, was found to be a very different thing—the time was too short, the opportunities too few—it was, in fact, commenced too late in the day. But the door to french literature was opened, and to be able to read

Moliere in the original, even if nothing else had been gained, was worth all the time we spent at the school.

In all these various studies and pursuits, as well as in all the amusements of the club, good manners, good habits, and a gentlemanly tone of feeling were observed. Temperance, notwithstanding the goblets that occasionally figured in our songs, was the order of the day — the voluntary, unpledged habit of each and of all. We should as soon have thought of sharpening our wits by profanity as of drawing our inspiration from the glass.

As a specimen of the progress made in the art of rhyming, I annex an ode, which I recognized and cut from an Ohio newspaper some twenty years ago. It was attributed by the editor to the pen of Mr. Southwick, in whose paper (the Albany Register,) it originally appeared. It was in fact, however, one of the many similar productions of the Hotel Du Barraille. The first three stanzas were written by Mr. A., the remaining four by Mr. K. And with this, I close these idle, and I fear somewhat tedious, reminiscences.



## ODE

IN PRAISE OF TRIMMING.

---

## I.

HAPPY the man, in times like these,  
Who trims his sails to every breeze—  
    With every gale still veering :  
Who, to promote his private ends,  
Ne'er scruples to desert his friends—  
    Still by his interest steering.

## II.

O, could I trim with trimming Ben,  
I'd turn, and turn, and turn again—  
    With every change still trimming :  
Like Bray's famed vicar would I ride,  
Forever with the stronger side—  
    Still with the current swimming.

## III.

And should intrusive conscience still,  
In secret goadings thwart the will,  
    Like him I'd bravely doff it :  
Leave fame and honor far behind,  
Though dear to every noble mind,  
    And give up all for profit.

## IV.

What's honor's proud and crusty creed,  
To him who stands of cash in need,  
    Or him in search of place ?  
What's independence to a mind  
To wise servility inclined,  
    And fearless of disgrace !

## V.

What virtue dwells in empty fame?  
And what's the value of a name,  
To any but a novice?  
What's reputation, friendship, pride,  
Compared with fortune's flowing tide—  
With party, power, and office?

## VI.

The pliant, patriot, trimming tribe,  
Who wisely take the official bribe,  
To better their condition—  
Now sweeping 'fore the pop'lar gale,  
All former friends and creeds assail,  
And curse the opposition.

## VII.

And *this*, I hold, is wisdom's course,  
Stick to your party while in force,  
Or, while your party pay:  
But when defeat appears in view,  
And party loaves prove light and few,  
Up helm, and bear away!

---

RECOLLECTIONS OF HUDSON,

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF ALBANY."

---

## PREFACE.

I have always looked upon it as a piece of impertinence in an Author to usher his book into the world without a preface. It is like walking into your house without knocking. I care not what the caliber of the thing may be, whether an iron-bound quarto, or a two-penny pamphlet, nor by whom written, a Humboldt or a Headley, it should have a well considered, staid and respectful preface. The Author should not only announce his name, but tell us who he is, where he came from, *and how he came to write the book!* He should moreover state what the book contains, the character of its contents, and whether in his judgment it is worth the money that is asked for it.

Entertaining these views, and disposed to furnish example as well as precept, I proceed to state, that the name of the writer of these reminiscences (according to his own account) is Ignatius Jones, of Jonesborough Hall; that they were written in one of the long evenings of 1847, as a philosophical exercise of the powers of memory, and for amusement only.

That they were *not* written with any view to publication, or with any *other view*, is he thinks sufficiently apparent from their style and character, but that he, the said Jones, having subsequently written and published certain "Random Recollections of Albany," has ventured to append these kindred sketches to a second edition of that work, trusting that they will be received with the same indulgence that was extended to their Albany relatives.

On the subject of their *contents*, I am bound to say something. They contain, then, (among innumerable other things) some account of the original settlers of Hudson and of the early prosperity of the city; some notice of the people called Quakers, and some brief sketches of the loafers of the town, and other distinguished personages, civil and political.

As to their intrinsic value, were I to be governed by the cost of their manufacture, or by the low-priced character of the raw material, I should not, I confess, estimate them very highly. But, like all other commodities, they are subject to the laws and contingencies of trade: and are therefore worth, —just what they will bring.

That there is any thing in them good or bad, useful or ornamental, is not pretended. They are not, however, to be considered as mere moonshine: they are not fancy pieces. They owe nothing to the inventive faculties, nothing to the spirit of poetry, nothing even to the coloring of the imagination. On the contrary, they are true and faithful transcripts from the *records of memory* — unembellished scenes and sketches from real life, hastily indeed, and carelessly written, but with a spirit of fairness and in a tone of good feeling not to be mistaken.

Whether these things, taken together, are in their favor or against them, will depend upon the taste of the reader.

I. J.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF HUDSON.

SOME time in the autumn of 1847, I had occasion to spend a part of two days in the city of Hudson—a city in which I had passed the greater part of the first twenty years of my life. Though born on Quaker-Hill, in the county of Dutchess, I have still been in the habit of considering Hudson as my native town, for the reason that my earliest recollections date from that place. Many years had elapsed since I had before visited the city, otherwise than by passing rapidly through it. I had now leisure to stroll through its streets and ramble over its hills; to look at the old dilapidated mansion in which I had passed my boyish days—and to pause and wonder at its apparently diminished size, and wretched aspect.

The feelings and associations that were awakened by this review of scenes so familiar and yet so changed, I shall not attempt to describe. I am much more disposed to recall the joyous spirit of the past, than to dwell upon the gloomy aspect

of the present; to transcribe from the glowing page of memory, rather than to speculate upon the melancholy results of time.

The population of the town, though greatly diminished, struck me as having undergone a still greater change in character than in numbers. Most of the faces I met with, were new to me; and the few that I recognized, bore evident signs of the flight of fortune as well as of time. But what struck me still more forcibly, was the all-pervading air of listless indolence, and the sabbath-like stillness of the place.

There are doubtless to be found in Hudson, as in every community, individuals who are enabled successfully to resist the current of adversity, and to thrive even in the midst of penury. These exceptions, however, though in the present case few, and to my eye far from being prominent, did but render the general decadency more striking. The change that had taken place, was not to be disguised; and as the recollection of other days rushed upon my mind, I could not but exclaim, "What a difference between the *present* and the *past*, as it regards both *men* and *things*!"

Hudson was, indeed, for many years one of the most beautiful and flourishing towns on the noble river whose name it bears. The site of the city,

and the views from its bold high bank in front, are still beautiful,—but the days of its prosperity have long since passed away. Its population has decreased, its wealth diminished, its business sources have dried up, and almost every vestige of its former glory has disappeared. There are now no shipping at its docks, and no ships building. There is now no ring of the anvil to be heard,—no sound of the axe or the hammer. There is no bustle of seamen along its wharves, no song of the ropemaker upon its hills, no throng of wagons from the interior, no crowds of men in its streets. The shipyards are overgrown with grass, the wharves have mouldered away, the ropewalk is deserted, the warehouses are empty, and the once busy crowds have long since disappeared. It is only on the arrival or departure of a steamboat that any decided signs of life are visible: And yet the surrounding scenery is as beautiful as ever. The river has neither diminished in breadth or depth: the tide ebbs and flows as usual; the hills are as green, the valleys as rich, and the Catskill mountains as high and as blue as they were when the city was in its prime, and its morning stars first sang together! Yet the silent, and half-depopulated town seems to communicate a melancholy air to every thing around it. “’Tis

Greece," said I, repeating to myself one of Lord Byron's verses —

" 'Tis Greece, but living Greece, no more!"

There is, however, some considerable wealth still left in Hudson; and with it much professional talent, and high personal respectability. Could industry but find encouragement or reward, industry would again become rife and active. But it unfortunately happens, that those of its citizens who possess the means of encouraging the business interests of the place, have neither the public spirit nor the energy of character to employ those means to advantage. Or, in other words, to risk one farthing for the *general good*. This, however, may be prudent, — perhaps wise!

The spirit of enterprize is indeed dead. Not even the well-directed efforts of Mr. Barnard, nor the persevering exertions of Mr. Curtiss, could keep it alive. But notwithstanding this total absence of life and spirit, there is no appearance of wretchedness or of want in any part of the city. There is no exhibition of vice, no spectacle of misery: no *five points*, to give celebrity to any quarter. On the contrary, there is a general appearance of frugality, of neatness and of order.

The elevated position of the town renders it airy and healthful, and gives it, when viewed from



the river, as you approach it from the south, rather an imposing aspect. But for the want of business, nothing can compensate — for the tedium of eternal dullness, nothing can atone.

But let us go back from the present to the past. Let us turn from the decrepitude of age, to the buoyancy and vigor of youth, — from lassitude to exertion, from penury to wealth.

The original settlers of Hudson, were a fine specimen of the New-England race; stout, well-formed, noble-looking men. Many of them wealthy, all possessed of means, and all active, intelligent, and enterprising. Some few of them, I remember, were even somewhat aristocratic in their air and manner. One of the principal founders of the city, Thomas Jenkins, was indeed a princely-looking man; uniting the stateliness and dignity of the old school of gentlemen, with the brief address and energetic air of a man of business. I can see him at this moment, in my mind's eye, as distinctly as he appeared to me fifty years ago, — when standing on his wharf with his long pipe in one hand, and his gold-headed cane in the other, he watched and directed the preparations for the sailing of his ships. There are few such men to be found at the present day, even in the great metropolis itself. He and his brothers, it

was said, brought with them from the east half a million of dollars; and under his auspices, coasting, whaling, the West-India trade, and indeed almost every other species of trade and commerce, were for many years successfully prosecuted. As a merchant, though of some twenty years later date, Mr. Jenkins belonged to the school of Hancock — as stately in person, as dignified in demeanor, as princely in dress (bating a little gold lace,) and as authoritative in air and manner.

Never, by the by, was there a nobler race of men, whether physically or intellectually considered, than that which, under providence, guided the destinies of this country from 1770 to 1790. Nor did any of the colonies furnish finer specimens of that race, than Massachusetts.

Is it, I would ask, to the spirit of democracy, or is it to the more frequent use of *political machinery*, that we are to attribute the decline and fall of that patriot race? We certainly gain in some things, though we lose ground in others. We advance in knowledge, but seem to fall back in principle.

And yet, whenever I feel disposed to imagine that *the world is growing worse*, I cast my eyes back and contemplate the history of the chosen

people. I am struck with the pious humanity of Sarah, — the maternal morality of Rebeckah, and the worldly wisdom of Jacob and of Laban. I hear the cries of Hagar and her child in the wilderness — I read, with singular emotion, the impositions practiced upon Isaac, — and I admire beyond all measure the subtle substitution of Leah, and the curious philosophy of the pealed rods. But it is incumbent upon us diligently to remember, that these things were permitted for wise purposes: and that the transgressions of the Davids and Solomons of modern days, are not to be cloaked by a comparison with those of the illustrious ancients, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

But this is somewhat digressive — let us return to our subject.

Hudson, in its early days, was as remarkable for its enterprize and vigor, as it now is for its inertness and decreptitude. Of its original proprietors, one solitary individual alone remains. He witnessed the laying of the first corner stone, and has lived to see the once stately edifice, like himself, tending to decay. Do you ask why the trade of this town has thus dwindled into such comparative insignificance? I answer, the town was built on the wrong side of the river. But it is an error of judgment to build a city with refer-

ence to foreign commerce, on either side of a river, at any point between the head of navigation and the outlet to the ocean. This is particularly true as it respects the Hudson. New-York and Albany must ever command the trade of the river and the interior. The one as the *great depot*, levying a transit duty; the other as the *great mart* to which the products of the north and west necessarily tend. All the intermediate towns on the river have their limits. Their trade is necessarily confined to small localities and narrow strips. Hence they may be pretty villages, but unless they become the seats of manufacturing establishments, they can be nothing more.

There is, perhaps, with the exception of the individual to whom I have just referred, no one now living who has so distinct a recollection of the town and its early inhabitants, as the writer of these random sketches. I mention this, without connecting, or meaning to connect with it, any idea of its usefulness, value or advantage, whatever. There is, indeed, to my mind, something perfectly ridiculous in the tenacity with which memory clings to and retains the impressions of early life. No matter how frivolous the subject may be, nor how uninteresting the facts or the forms thus retained; *there* they are, and

*there* they will remain, in all their original freshness and vividity. You cannot shake them off; you cannot get rid of them, either by proscription, effort or neglect.

I shall probably be tempted, or rather compelled, in the course of these reminiscences, to give the reader some singular illustrations of this trick of memory, this tenacity of mind, which makes no distinction between the *useful* and the *useless*, and which consequently preserves with equal care the pebble and the diamond.

---

### THE NURSE.

I recollect, as of but yesterday, things which took place when I was but three years of age. I remember distinctly the form and features of the nurse in whose lap I sat to be dressed. She was, however, I must say, a person not easily to be forgotten by any one. Her voice was as peculiar as her person was remarkable; it was as shrill as a fife, and in addition to its cajoling tones, had in it all the elements of authority; while as to her *weight*, it could not have been less than twenty stone, or two hundred and eighty pounds, avoirdupois! To this was added the strength of a giant. One's memory, therefore, should not be

too harshly censured for retaining the impressions of such a personage. But she was something more than I have yet stated. She was something of an orator, too: full of zeal, of action, and of emphasis. I still remember a speech of hers, addressed to a political audience, which I consider worthy of record: though delivered at a period somewhat later than that to which I have referred. It was at the time Napoleon was threatening the invasion of England, and when many of our small anti-gallican politicians believed, or affected to believe, that if successful in that quarter, we should next *have him here*. On hearing this, my patriot nurse, who had never yet seen the man she feared, rose and declared, that "if mister Bonaparty ever put his foot upon *these ere* shores, she would give him a piece of her mind, she'd warrant him!" Adding, with a look and gesture suited to the sense of the phrase, "that she'd spank the little corsican brute and stick him upon top of Saint Paulses!" It was a speech worthy of Hanibal, or even of *Hanegan* himself!

My recollections of Hudson go back to the building — when the town, like myself, was in its infancy. I remember the picture it exhibited on a cold calm morning in winter: I remember the deep masses of snow that lay piled upon the tops

of the houses, glittering in the morning sun ; and the tall straight columns of smoke, that from the tops of the few scattered chimneys ascended high and unbroken into the air. It is the first recollection I have of the city, and must of course have been the first sight of the kind I had ever seen : hence the impression was necessarily distinct and strong.

A still more striking picture was exhibited a few years afterwards by the conflagration in the night of a large building, occupied as a bookstore and printing office, which was consumed with all its contents. The organization of the fire department of the city, was at that time extremely imperfect ; there being no engines, no buckets, no water, and no firemen ! The fire, therefore, was left to take its own course ; and it accordingly raged not only unchecked, but unmolested. Fortunately the night was calm, and the flames ascended directly upwards to the very skies, carrying with them innumerable fragments of papers and burning books, blazing as they flew ; filling the whole air with their fiery forms, and then descending in every direction, covering the town as with a shower of falling stars. Such a scene, so beautiful, and *then* so new, was not easily to be forgotten by man or boy.

Almost all the early inhabitants of Hudson, were from the New England States, but mostly from Massachusetts: and as I have already remarked, were an active, enterprizing and intelligent body of people. No town or county in the State could boast of a more respectable population. But in the course of human events, this uniformity in caste and character was, like that of the ancient Chinese, broken in upon and impaired by an influx of the Tartars. Hudson, in fact, like all other new towns, soon numbered among its inhabitants individuals of all descriptions and complexions, castes and characters. Idlers, vagrants and vagabonds, as spotted as Jacob's cattle, crept in, one after another, until every variety of the loafer species was represented, and the ground tier rendered complete.

It suited my taste to take cognizance of all that belonged to these new-comers; to note down their looks and actions, and to sketch upon the blank leaves of memory a full-length portrait of the most distinguished individual of each tribe. I must, indeed, have taken a particular fancy to these gentry — for, of the habits, character and costume of *no other class*, is my knowledge so perfect, or my recollections so clear. There were among them no less than four deserters from Bur-



goyne's army: namely, a frenchman, a scotchman, a belgian and a hessian.

---

## THE FRENCHMAN.

Monsieur Lescure, — who had been a drummer under Burgoyne, was now barber to the corporation, there being no other knight of the razor in town. With him, as with all other frenchmen, from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the camp to the shop, from the drumsticks to the *pole* and *comb*, there was but a single step. With him, drumming and shaving, like the love and war of Lothario, took turns like day and night. He united, indeed, with singular felicity, the characteristics of both professions. He had the air, the gait, the consequence, and the coxcombry of the one, with the familiar loquacity, and the pert but polite demeanor, of the other.

I can still see him, in imagination, with his frizzled head, his broad low forehead, his little black eyes, his high check bones, wide mouth, and triangular visage, walking backward and forward (as was his wont) before his little shop door, humming a tune and snapping his fingers, with all that careless gaiety, so characteristic of his countrymen. Though low in stature, he was well

formed: indeed, a handsomer leg than his own, seldom walked into his shop. His dress was in keeping with his person and his profession. A long broad-striped calico gown, a short white apron, tight nankeen small clothes, ruffled shirt, silk stockings and yellow slippers, completed his outward man. Such was Monsieur Lescure.

---

### JEMMY FRAZER.

The scotchman was quite another sort of person: an animal, I may say, of a very different description. He was familiarly known by the name of Jemmy — though on the list of the civil dignitaries of the town, he was written down JAMES FRAZER — for Jemmy had found favor in the eyes of the common council, and had received the high and lucrative appointment of town crier. But Jemmy loved a glass of grog, and was happier, it is said, with *two* than with one. Be this as it may, he was popular in the lower wards, and his office gave him influence at the polls. Hence he was looked up to, as one dog does to another who wears a collar. His evening levees were generally held in and about the market-place, and were numerously attended by the boys, who encored his speeches and applauded his gyra-

tions, sometimes, by shouts, and sometimes by a volley of eggs, which Jemmy too often discovered were none of the sweetest. Of the style in which he performed his official duties, the following may be taken as a specimen :

Mr. Nixon, Cashier of the Bank of Columbia, in going late in the evening from the office to his house, lost the key of the Bank ; but it was near midnight before he missed it. Not wishing to create an alarm by a search at that late hour, he concluded to say nothing about it till morning ; but the search in the morning proved unsuccessful, and as the last resort, Jemmy was sent for. The particulars were related and Jemmy was directed to cry the lost key through the streets, with a reward of two dollars to the finder, but was specially charged to let no one know that it was *the key of the Bank*. So, a little after sunrise, Jemmy commenced his round, bell in hand — Cling-ding ! cling-ding ! Hare ya ! hare ya ! But, early as it was, Jemmy had been up long enough to get pretty well corned, and as the boys were collecting and shouting at his heels, his memory became somewhat confused, and the several particulars of time and place, with his instructions what to say and what *not to say*, got, somehow or other, all jumbled together ; — But, ringing his

bell stoutly, as if to clear up his ideas, he began again, "Hare ya ! hare ya ! Lost, between Jamy Nixon's and twalve o'clock at night, a large kay !" Here the boys interrupted him, with, — What sort of a key was it Jemmy ? What sort *of a key* was it ? Go to the deil ! cried Jemmy, turning short upon them, an I tell ye that, *ye'll be after getting into the Bonk with it !*

It grieves me to add, that for this very natural and judicious answer, Jemmy lost his commission — and that shortly thereafter the office of *Town Crier* was abolished.

---

## THE BELGIAN.

Notwithstanding the warlike character of his "Belgie sires of old," and the military reputation he had recently acquired under Burgoyne, the Belgian was of a peaceable and unobtrusive temperament: yet he made a figure in the walks of civil life, which attracted universal attention ; and which, had it been sketched by the hand of genius, would have carried his name and fame down to the latest posterity. But the opportunity was lost ; and all that now remains of the ancient Belgian, is the deep impression he left upon the minds of his cotemporaries. He commenced his

career in Hudson, (and ended as he began), by peddling *clams* and *white sand*, which he carried about from door to door, in an old rickety one-horse wagon, taking his pay in *ashes*! His appearance in the streets was a subject worthy of the study of TENIERS, or even of RUBENS himself. His horse was as blind as a beetle, and every bone in his body might have been counted as easily as the spokes in the wheel of the wagon to which he was attached. As for the old Belgian himself, he was, if possible, more of a wreck of bones than his horse; almost as blind, and twice as much of a scarecrow. His frame seemed to be a mere complication of angles. There was nothing about him curved or round, save his head. His dress, if dress it might be called, was composed of sundry specimens of ancient costumes, seemingly selected by the hand of taste to set him off to advantage. His coat, which had probably been in more wars than one, came down to his very heels—at least one tail of it: the *other*, it was said, had been left on the Plains of Abraham. A part of one sleeve too, was missing. *That* was believed to have been lost at Saratoga. The *color* had been originally blue, but had grown grey, partly through age, and partly through the mystifying influence of sand and *ashes*. Its buttons

had shared the fate of the tail and sleeve; they had been *detached*, and left behind in the wars. His nether garment stopped short at the knees, and all below that point was in a state of nature. To crown all, his hat was crownless—that is to say, entirely open at the top. It was, moreover, minus two-thirds of the brim. Such a team, man, horse and wagon no human eye ever beheld before, or will ever behold again!—But the belgian had his good qualities—he was a man of but few words, and those were monosyllables—*Clams* and *Sand*! All I have to add, is,—peace to his *Ashes*!

---

### THE HESSIAN.

As for the HESSIAN, he was a surly dog, and though cowardly, kept the boys at bay—few of them were hardy enough when they saw him passing, to set up their usual shout of “There goes one of Burgoyne’s men!” And yet a sly egg from an unseen hand occasionally overtook him in turning a corner, and left a mark sufficiently evident to more than one of the senses.

---

### THE QUAKERS.

Having thus disposed of these veterans of Burgoyne’s army, I now turn to another and very

different class of citizens—a class, less ornate, less picturesque in appearance, but more regular in their habits and more peaceful in their pursuits.

Nearly one-third of the early inhabitants of Hudson, belonged to what is called “The Society of Friends”—a society noted for all those qualities which render a community respectable and prosperous—frugality, temperance, industry, love of order, and *a love of money*. As my mother was a member of that society, I was of course (in my juvenile days) sent to the quaker church, where I had leisure in abundance to note a variety of facts and proceedings, which my memory has preserved with scrupulous exactness.

*There*, upon the high seats, and high-backed benches, sat the scribes and elders of the church, in their broad-brimmed hats, leaning upon their hickory-headed canes. *There*, too, was seen the striking classification or division of the sexes; the males on the one side, the females on the other, with the boys and girls seated in the rear of the respective divisions. Then came the queer-looking preachers of different ages, sizes and sexes. There sat the venerable Lott Tripp, blind as Milton in his latter days, but resembling Milton in no other particular. There too, was old Thomas

Comstock; a worthy old gentleman, but no Cicero. On the opposite side, in conscious superiority, with her keen enquiring eye, sat the celebrated HANNAH BARNARD, who was subsequently "*read* out of meeting" for having herself *read* too much. Next to these queer-looking preachers, came the still queerer preaching—beginning with a single word—then a pause of two or three minutes—then another word, and another pause,—but the pauses becoming shorter and shorter, and the words getting closer and closer together, until at length it became a vehement and torrent-like roar of quaker eloquence, half said, half sung! In comparison with which, the oratory of Massillon, or even that of the celebrated Bridaine, was tame and spiritless.

---

### JETHRO BELL.

But I have a better reason than any of these, for remembering the quaker church and quaker meetings. The old codgers—I beg their pardon—I mean the conscript fathers upon the high benches, had a *practice* which excited my ire at the time, and which determined me to quit their church and their society, as soon as time or chance would enable me to choose for myself.



The *practice* to which I refer, was that of getting quietly off their high seats, and coming gingerly down the middle aisle, with malice prepense, to rap the heads of the boys who happened to be asleep. The taps I received upon my noddle, from the ends of their long, ill-looking canes, have never been forgotten or forgiven. So determined were the old squaretoes upon the high benches, to keep the boys from the luxury of a nap, that they deputed one of their number, (a very worthy bushy-headed old gentleman, by the name of Jethro Bell,) to pitch his tent in the midst of their camp, so as to be ready to rap their noddles, on the first suspicion of a nod.

I remember well the consternation he excited by his sudden appearance upon the juvenile benches. He took his seat, as it happened, next to a boy who was considered as a sort of idiot—that is, a compound of imbecility, cunning and mischief; and for the first two hours of the session, kept a bright lookout on all sides; but finding the juveniles *wide awake*, he at length relaxed his vigilance, and leaning his body forward, and resting his chin upon the ivory head of his cane, seemed to indulge in a more profitable train of thoughts. This our cunning imbecile, who had been all the while watching him like a cat, quietly

noted. Perceiving, at the same time, the awkwardness of the position in which the old gentleman had placed his *gravity*, he meditated a piece of mischief, the temptation to which, was too strong to be resisted. Without, therefore, giving the old man time to finish the business calculations which he was probably making, he suddenly struck the cane from under him, when, to the infinite delight of the boys, down he came, with a terrible crash, head foremost, between the benches! The whole meeting was thrown into confusion. The elders gathered together round the old man, who lay sprawling upon the floor, utterly speechless. It was at first thought to be a case of apoplexy; but the truth was soon out, and our idiot friend innocently confessed that he did it, "*in trying to kill a fly on Jethro's cane!*" It is hardly necessary to add, that this was the first and *last appearance* of friend Bell upon the boys' benches!

It must, in justice to the boys, be remembered, that the exercises in a quaker church, are few and uncertain; that there is no *regular* service; no reading, no praying, no singing; that nine sundays out of ten, there is even no *preaching*; and that consequently, in a great majority of cases, the whole broad-brimmed and dove-colored flock sit together in profound silence for three

mortal hours! Now, I would ask, what boy of an undrabbed intellect, could, under such circumstances, keep awake?

In addition to this distaste to their *church discipline*, I have a political objection to the society of Friends. I remember hearing my father say that the quakers were almost all *tories* during the war of the revolution: that they were not only not *for* the country, but *against* it. But notwithstanding all this, I am bound in honor and in justice to admit, that a more orderly, industrious, and respectable class of citizens (bating the practice of rapping the boys' heads in church,) is not to be found, under any christian denomination, in the United States.

---

### MR. GRANT.

In a town, whose population does not exceed two or three thousand, there can be no families or persons *unknown*. The character of every new comer is immediately sifted to the bottom,—the run of every stranger is soon pumped dry. If any one has any peculiar gift or quality, it is soon found out—if any thing marvelous to tell, he is sure of an attentive, if not an admiring audience.

Among the many singular persons with whom I

became acquainted in those early days, was a young man by the name of *Grant*, whose residence in the city was somewhat accidental, and of but short duration. He had apparently been well educated; but, although neither vicious nor intemperate, had adopted a loose and wandering way of life. His family, according to his own account, were originally from England, but had resided some years in France, and subsequently in Germany, from which country they had emigrated to the United States. He spoke several languages, was seemingly familiar with English literature, conversed well, and was yet a common sailor, following the sea for a living. He had evidently seen much of the world, and was capable of giving at least an interesting account of what he had heard and seen. He became a great favorite with the young men of the city; to whom he related the history of his voyages and adventures—his hair-breadth escapes, and moving accidents by flood and field—somewhat after the manner of Othello, or the *gens d'esprit* in Gil Blas.

Nothing could be more amusing than some of his stories. They were not only good in themselves, but were told with an air of gravity, which sometimes contrasted whimsically with the spirit of the tale. They were moreover related with so

much minuteness, or specification of detail, as to preclude all idea of their being the mere inventions of the moment.

On one occasion, I remember, we asked him to give us some account of his early life, to which he replied, that there were few incidents of his boyish days, worth relating, or worth listening to; but, if we desired it, he would tell us a story, which would throw some light on the subject proposed. He doubted, however, whether we would have the patience to hear it through. We assured him that we should listen to it with the greatest pleasure. It was, he said, *a ghost story*, and one that he had always, until now, refrained from telling. This excited our curiosity to the highest pitch: and drawing our chairs in the form of a circle around him, we urged him to begin it without delay,—which he did, as nearly as my memory serves me, in the following words.

### THE GHOST STORY.

My father, commenced Mr. Grant, in a low and solemn tone—my father was a man of strong sense and sound judgment; and though not liberally educated, possessed much knowledge of the world and much general information, and yet, strange as it may appear, was decidedly skeptical

on the subject of ghosts. He did not, in fact, believe in their existence, and was, moreover, greatly disposed to ridicule those who did. He had no faith in the miracles of the present day. The laws of nature he considered as uniform and immutable, and to the imperfection of our senses, or the influence of the imagination, he attributed whatever appeared to be incompatible with those laws. He was aware of the disposition of the human mind to magnify and to exaggerate; and hence was unhappily led to coincide with the celebrated Sancho, "that the world was terribly given to lying."

He had been a navigator in his younger days, and was a skilful mathematician: And it was probably to his early habits of observation and love of science, that he was indebted for his *matter of fact* character of mind, as well as for his total freedom from that secret superstition which infects and characterizes "the wanderers of the deep." With *him*, names had no influence, and authorities but little weight, when opposed to the dictates of his own judgment or the unerring results of his mathematical philosophy. But vanity is the vice of the skeptical; and the great error of all self-taught or practical men, is, to take for their guide the inadequate light of their own

experience; to distrust the testimony of the learned; to consider as doubtful whatever is difficult to demonstrate, and to reject as visionary whatever they cannot comprehend.

My father, continued Mr. Grant, evidently belonged to this class, and derided the notion of ghosts as a lingering relic of former superstitions, at once idle and absurd. But my mother differed with my father upon this, as well as upon many other subjects. *Her* faith was not bounded by the narrow confines of human reason, nor controlled by the demonstrations of worldly science, but extended to the marvelous and the mysterious: and was evidently based upon the broad and pious principle, that *all things are possible with God*. And who shall dare, said Mr. Grant, with unusual emphasis, — as if a chord of his heart was still in unison with his mother's piety — *who shall dare* to bound his omnipotence, or fix a limit to his will!

Hence, — he continued, after a short pause — hence it was, that in relation to the doctrine of apparitions, my mind, when a child, vibrated between the extremes of sturdy skepticism and implicit faith: now inclining to the one, now tending to the other. At *night*, if my memory serves me, I was secretly disposed to subscribe to

the faith of my mother, and admit the probability of ghosts. But in the day time, the opinions of my father prevailed, and I coolly considered them, with all their adjuncts and etceteras, as the mere humbugs of fancy, and for the time being set them at defiance. A circumstance, however, occurred in my thirteenth year, which turned the scale, and settled the question in my mind for ever.

My father, at that time, resided on a farm situated on the banks of the Walkill, at the distance of about six miles from the town of Berne. To this town I was frequently despatched on family errands, and in the summer season, occasionally, on foot. Though of a light and slender form, I was still an active pedestrian of my age, and when at liberty to choose my own course, preferred walking to riding; since it afforded me an opportunity of making sundry inroads into orchards, and paying other digressional visits by the way. It furnished me, moreover, with an excellent excuse for being absent the whole day and returning late at night. On one occasion I had so far forgotten myself as to continue loitering about the town until the sun was nearly down. When suddenly recollecting myself, and perceiving the lateness of the hour, I ran hastily



over in my mind the objects of my errand, and having satisfied myself that all was right, I immediately set out for home, with a step quickened partly by the prospective darkness of the walk, and partly by a sense of my own delinquency. But before I had fairly left the town, the sun had sunk behind the mountains, and the misty twilight of evening was gathering in the vallies.

The country round, was at that time comparatively new, and in its aspect, broken and wild. On ascending the rising grounds on the east of the town, I looked back—and the whole valley was covered with a bluish haze, through which a few scattered lights in the suburbs of the village were alone visible. I pushed rapidly on,—for the shades of evening were now fast gathering upon the hills. But on gaining the summit of the ridge, I saw with delight the broad full moon rising majestically before me. She had just emerged from behind the clouds that skirted the eastern horizon, and was throwing across the darkened landscape, a soft and cheering light. I crossed the brow of the hill, and continued briskly along the descending grounds until I reached the plain below, where the road branched off in different directions. The one was the main, or valley road, as it was called; the other, sheering

to the left, led directly across a high range of rocky hills, and was consequently but little traveled. I paused a moment to consider which I should take. It occurred to me that I might perhaps get a chance ride on the lower road; but the lateness of the hour rendered it improbable. The mountain path looked dark and lonely. The greater part of it was through a thick but stunted growth of pines and cedars, impervious to the rays of either sun or moon. The distance was at least two miles across, and there was neither house nor human habitation by the way. But it had this advantage, it was a mile and a half the shorter of the two. I listened in the hope of hearing the sound of wheels returning from the town. But no sound was to be heard save the shrill and solitary notes of the whippoor-will, as they occasionally rung out from the thickets of the valley road.

The moon was now peering above the tops of the hills, and her friendly light determined my course. I brought my resolution to the sticking point, and turning to the left with an air of confidence, boldly took the rougher and the shorter road. I soon reached the little stream that washed the foot of the mountain, and in a few minutes more, was lost amid the shades of the pines that covered its steep and shaggy sides.

Though I had often traveled the road before, yet it had always been by daylight: and hence there were now parts of it that appeared new to me. The rocks seemed to have increased in size, the acclivities to have become more steep, and the pines and hemlocks to have assumed a darker and a wilder aspect. My imagination took the color of the moment. All the ghost and goblin stories that I had ever heard, now rushed with peculiar freshness to my mind: and what was more, my mother's fearful opinions came crowding at their back. But the rapid pace with which I moved soon set my blood in motion; the cool mountain air braced my nerves, and I either shook the phantoms from my mind, or set them at defiance. Physical exertion is, in most cases, an antidote to fear. The muscles and the imagination seldom work together. Keeping, however, a bright lookout, both to the right and left, and footing it briskly, I soon reached the higher and more open grounds. But even there, the path was fearfully checkered by the deep shadows of projecting rocks, and the impervious umbrage of occasional clumps of pines and cedars.

I at length reached the summit of the highest hill: and more fortunate than Tam O'Shanter, had, as I thought, gained unscathed the key-stone

of the bridge. Considering myself, therefore, as in some measure "out of the woods," I ventured, at an open space, to make a full stop, and to look deliberately around me. This I did, partly out of compliment to my courage, and partly to take breath for a moment after so rapid a march.

The prospect was truly beautiful. On the west, the distant mountains reared their high heads and stretched their huge forms in long and undulating lines. The checkered landscape of the intervening valley was spread beneath. The moon shone with unclouded splendor, and poured upon the surrounding hills a flood of light. The wild and impressive character of the scenery; the solitariness of the spot, and the breathless silence that reigned over all, produced a state of mind and feeling which I had never before experienced. A thousand vague and indistinct ideas, forms and images floated in my mind; and among them, were not a few that owed their origin to the pious credulity of my mother.

But soon recollecting myself, and brushing these misty matters from my mind, I continued my course steadily and rapidly along, and had nearly reached the eastern brow of the mountain, (at the foot of which lay the valley road,) when all of a sudden my ears were assailed by a most terrific

sound issuing from a turn in the path directly in front of me, and scarcely three paces distant. The blood rushed to my heart with such force that I could scarcely breathe—the shock was indeed electric. I started back, and turning upon my heel, ran with the lightness and speed of a deer. But recovering my senses, and perceiving nothing behind me, I stopt—and listened—all was still. I looked to see whether it was practicable to get round the spot. But to quit the path was too hazardous—I might not be able to regain it—and to turn back and recross the mountain, was out of the question.

I therefore determined to advance and take the consequence, be it what it might. With my mind thus made up, I proceeded cautiously along, casting my eye from side to side, and reconnoitering with breathless vigilance. I had hardly reached the spot from whence the sound issued, when, to my horror, there it was again! the same terrific sound! It was a distinct but long and hollow groan, accompanied by a rattling noise, as if advancing to the road. My hair began to rise—but I stood my ground—and after a short pause, I demanded, in as firm a tone as I could assume, “Who’s there?” No answer was returned. I repeated the question—but still no answer. I then collected my

strength, and walked deliberately by. Having now fairly passed it, the next impulse was to run, and if pursued, test its speed. But I thought of my father. I should never dare tell the story to him: in truth, I had no story to tell, for as yet, I had seen nothing. I had heard something to be sure—and as far as my own feelings were concerned, *it was enough*. Yet as I was now within a mile or two of home, and as the path was before me and the enemy behind, I began to feel my courage rise. So, without further parley, I wheeled round and marched boldly up to the spot. I advanced to the very edge of the road—I pushed the dark braches of the hemlocks aside, and looked in—I saw nothing—I entered the thicket—and started back! for there it stood, as white as snow! huge! monstrous! looking me, with its green and yellow eyes, directly in the face! I considered myself a gone dog—for I was within the reach of its grasp, and had seemingly no power to move. The blood seemed to curdle in my veins, and the cold sweat stood upon my brow. I shook like an aspen leaf. It was no delusion of the senses—there was no mistake as to its existence. There it stood—palpable, tangible, terrific! I steadied myself by grasping the branch of a tree—and after recovering a little,

placed one foot back, so as to be ready for a start, and then spoke to it again. But it was evidently not one of the answering kind—it made no reply. Collecting myself, therefore, and looking more steadily at it, I thought I could perceive it diminish, both in bulk and stature—it seemed to be nearer to the earth, and to look less formidable. I walked directly up to it—when lo, and behold! what should it be, but an old Buck!—the leader of the fleecy flock that fed upon the mountains. He had contrived to get his head and huge circumference of horns between the two stems, or upright branches of a sapling, that were united near the ground, but more open above; and in his struggles to get loose, had pressed his neck down into the narrow gorge, and was choking to death. He was alone—for the flock, (following the example too often set them by a higher order of animals) regardless of the sufferings of their leader, had rambled on and left him to his fate.

It required my utmost exertions to relieve him: and even after I had succeeded, he was for some time unable to stand. I stood by him, however, until he had partially recovered his strength, then got him upon his feet and conducted him into the road: where, after advising him to keep to the open grounds, and above all things to beware of

again thrusting his head between the branches of a mountain staddle, I wished him good night ! and, *holding the doctrine of ghosts in sovereign contempt*, pursued my course with a light and rapid step down the eastern declivity of the mountain.

We thanked Mr. Grant for his story — praised it as the best of the kind we had ever heard, and assured him that we had listened to it with the greatest pleasure and the profoundest attention. So profound, *we might have added*, that several of us came within an ace of *getting asleep* during its narration !

I agree with Mr. Macaulay, that in the history of a nation, the character and condition of the people must constitute an important element ; and that the habits and manners of individuals, selected from the various classes of a community, must necessarily throw some light upon the character of the community itself.

---

### MRS. GILES.

In accordance with these views, I proceed to transcribe from the pencilings of memory, (as Mr. Willis would say,) some account of the distinguished women of Hudson : And the first name that presents itself on this list, next to that of the



nurse, of whom I have already spoken, is that of Mrs. Giles. She was a short, stout, rosy-looking woman, round as a dumpling and fat as butter; and well she might be—for she was one of the fortunate few whose *ways* and *means* were not, like those of Olé Bull, limited to a *single* string—she had *two* to her bow; she kept a sort of juvenile pastry shop—sold pies, and played upon the fiddle! Yes! I repeat—sold pies and played upon the fiddle! Science in music is one thing, effect is quite another. Judging from the sounds still ringing in my ears, I should say Paganini was a fool to her. Even the music of the opera, with all its scientific trills, sinks into insignificance when compared with that to which I used to listen in Mrs. Giles's little back parlor.

Youth has its favorites, and I am well aware that memory is sometimes disposed to dip her pencil in the dyes of the imagination, to set them off to advantage. Every period of life has its wonders: but in all my subsequent ramblings, I have seen nothing in the musical world equal to Mrs. Giles: nothing, indeed, approaching to her Apollo-like form, air and manner! All other fiddlers have been to me, when out of sight, out of mind: they have, indeed, died with their strains.

But Mrs. Giles still lives in the apple of my eye, and is, in despite of time, immortal!

---

### MRS. NEWBERRY.

Among my female acquaintances of those days I had many special favorites, of whom my memory can still furnish what the printers call proof impressions.

Of this class, was an elderly lady by the name of Mrs. Newberry. She was indeed a particular friend of mine, and was moreover well known to every one who had any pretensions to a knowledge of the town. She was a woman of no ordinary note, and born to command no ordinary share of attention and respect. In selfwill, strong feeling and decision of character, she had few equals; and in circumference and ponderosity, beat even Mrs. Giles. But, like the weather in April, she was of a temperament somewhat changeable. Or, like the Douglas of Home

“ mild with the mild,  
But with the forward she was as fierce as fire!”

she kept a little bakery, and sustained her independence and the honors of her house by selling gingerbread. I was of course a frequent visitor. Seeing me one day in her shop rudely pushed

aside by a boy much stouter than myself, and perceiving that I was mortified by the insult, she thrust the aggressor out of doors, and turning to me, said, “never mind, never mind, (patting me on the head consolingly,) you’ll make a man worth a dozen of *him* yet — *You’ll* be a gentleman, and *he* never will.” Not a word of that speech was ever forgotten. A part of the prophecy I was determined to make good. I felt it as a sort of confidential endorsement, which I was bound in honor to protect: as I now feel bound to preserve and protect the memory of her that made it.

I shall venture to present the reader with one sketch more: it is of the celebrated

### HANNAH BARNARD.

A name, which I have already had occasion, incidentally, to mention. Her reputation was not confined to the limits of the city, nor even to the extended circle of the Society of Friends, to which she belonged. She had traveled in Europe, and of course had seen something of the world. She had shaken hands with the great apostle of negro freedom (Matthew Clarkson), and had conversed with the *savans* of Edinburgh, of Paris and of London. Still, she was viewed by her quaker friends with an unfavorable eye — she was looked

upon as one of those *new* and uncertain lights, which are rather calculated to *alarm* than to *illuminate*,—to darken, rather than to decorate the sphere in which they move. But the true secret of their doubts and dislikes was to be found in the fact, that “Aunt Hannah” (as she was familiarly called,) knew more than they did. She had certainly read and thought, and traveled a good deal more than her neighbors: a good deal more, indeed, than *they* thought becoming a woman belonging to the *society of friends*. She was indeed of a singularly inquisitive, not to say philosophical turn of mind. She had pried, and was continually prying into the *nature of things*; and tracing the learned and analogical lines of *causes* and *effects*. She had looked into my Lord Bacon, and had probably turned over the philosophical pages of Hume and Gibbon. She had, incontinently, strayed along the confines of theology, with Priestly and Paley, and even wandered into the regions of metaphysics and *critiques* with Bolingbroke and Bayle.

But what more sorely puzzled and perplexed her quaker friends, was her frequent quotations from *heathen writers*, and her familiar use of latin words. I tell thee, Richard, said she, to one of the squaretoed elders of the church, “I tell thee

Richard, thy *ipse dixit* doesn't pass for law with me," and for this, and similar transgressions against the canons of ignorance, she was "read out of meeting."

Her husband's name was Peter, one of the kindest-hearted, best tempered and happiest men that ever lived. Though poor, and earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, no prince was richer, and no king ever sat upon his throne more contentedly or more gloriously, than Peter sat upon his trucks.

I once, by some accident or whim, boarded awhile with aunt Hannah; but the singular distribution of the meals, soon obliged me to change my quarters. I found Aunt Hannah at my room door at 5 o'clock in the morning, with the astounding intelligence that "breakfast was on the table, and that Peter was waiting for his coffee." At half-past eleven, (though twelve was the regular hour,) I was summoned to dinner, with the *stirring* remark, that the potatoes would be cold unless I came quickly.

But Hannah Barnard was an extraordinary woman; somewhat too independent perhaps of the forms and usages of the little world in which she lived; but possessed of more talent, more reading, more good sense, and more of that direct,

honest simplicity of character, than could be found in any *dozen* of the society to which she belonged. And yet all her good qualities, collectively mustered, could not save her from the penalties of *quoting latin!* she was condemned as a heretic, and read out of meeting!

There were doubtless many other clever women in the city of Hudson, but of those rightly entitled to the epithet *distinguished*, I have, perhaps, already furnished a more than sufficient sample.

The most accomplished woman, however, that Hudson ever gave birth to, was

MRS. ———.

Though something older than myself, she was yet comparatively young when I first had the pleasure of making her acquaintance. In her youth she must have been eminently beautiful, as many striking evidences of it were, long afterwards, sufficiently apparent. In her maturer age, she united dignity with elegance, and taste with judgment. There was a natural ease and grace in her conversation, air and manner, that are seldom to be met with even in the most polished circles.

She had a daughter, too, (if my memory serves me!) who, to the rare accomplishments of her

mother, added an air of intellectual beauty peculiarly her own. This lady, unintentionally, and as I believe, all unconsciously, threw a chain about my neck, which, from its tenure I found it difficult to wear, and from the potency of its spell, still more difficult to throw off. It was at length, however, shivered to atoms by the breath of the fair lady herself. It is hardly necessary to add, that its golden links were soon after re-united, and the mystic coil seen glittering round the neck of another; who, it must be admitted, won it and wore it like a gentleman and philosopher. Nor was the first unpremeditated essay of its power wholly lost. Its influence was long felt—never repudiated, never forgotten. On the contrary, as time obliterated the lines of the original impression, the rosy fingers of the imagination retouched them with delight.

Thus, from the dubious empire of passion, the subject naturally slid into the more dubious region of poetry, until at length it became difficult to distinguish between the realities of fact and the creations of fancy, or even to separate in the mind the one from the other. But notwithstanding this mystification, neither pride, nor vanity, nor the fear of ridicule, could tempt my memory to throw a veil over the record,—much less to

erase the impassioned passage from her tablets.

Of the young and the beautiful of those days, I may safely say, that no city in the union could boast of such a galaxy as that which poured its light on Hudson. No town of thrice its numbers could count in the hall of its gay assemblies, so many beautiful forms and faces. Even after the city had lost its outward splendor, after its pride and its prosperity had in a great measure passed away, this attractive charm, this living mine of beauty, still remained.

It is mournful to think, how few of all those young and joyous spirits realized their morning dreams. Most of them, indeed, have already passed to the land of shadows, and of those that remain, how few can look back upon the halcyon days of early life, without a mingled sigh of sorrow and delight!

There are, even in *this* world, some forms and combinations of beauty, which once seen are never forgotten. There are some voices too, whose sounds will dwell upon the ear long after the voice itself has become mute. Prominent among my recollections of those early days, is the image of one, (now no more!) in whom the rarest excellencies were strikingly combined—to whose fine voice I once listened with a delight,



that for the time being, banished all other things and thoughts. That voice, in richness, variety and compass, was indeed unequalled: nor was the eye less delighted than the ear: the *minstrel* was as fascinating as the *melody*. Her hair was as dark as the wing of the raven—her eye of the deep and “bonny blue.”

I have heard and seen most of the celebrated female vocalists of the last half century, as well indigenous as exotic; and yet to my taste, and in my judgment, they were in every respect—in form and feature, in power and pathos, mere “dowdies to fair *Charlotte Lynes*.”

---

## THE CLUBS.

Let us now turn to scenes of a rougher nature.

It may perhaps be expected that I should say something touching the *political* divisions and party contests of the town. But it must be remembered, that the interest attached to local feuds, seldom survives the excitement of the day; and that the *petty politics* of a village have no claim to notice, other than that which grows out of their influence upon the character and conduct of individuals.

Of the party politics of the country, prior to the

election of Mr. Jefferson, I knew but little, and thought still less. But subsequently to that period, I occasionally looked into the club rooms of the city; particularly into that of the republican party. My political predilections led me that way—but my personal tastes, I must confess, inclined me the other. The wit, the talent, and the gentlemanly bearing of the federalists, were to me decidedly more attractive than the rough but honest dogmatism of the republicans. The club rooms, however, of both parties, were amusing enough to a third person: that is to say, to one who cared not a brass farthing for the politics or the opinions of either.

The meetings of the republicans were held in an old store, whose shelves were still standing, and whose drapery of dust and cobwebs had remained undisturbed for twenty years. *There*, during the winter solstice, round a red hot stove, in a heated atmosphere blue with tobacco smoke, upon old pine benches and wooden bottomed chairs, sat the great antifederal fathers of the city! The word republican, was then just growing into favor; but *Federal* and *Antifederal*, were still the party designations of the day. The bugle note of *democracy* had not yet been sounded; nor had the philosophy of *radicalism* been debated in the clubs.

Among the most prominent of the fathers, above referred to, was Mr. Robert Jenkins,—a gentleman of high respectability, though somewhat abrupt and decisive in his tone and manner. The next in point of dignity, was Judge Dayton, a good citizen and an upright man: familiar with the £10 act, and fond of argumentation—reasoning upon all things, but in all things unreasonable,—never convinced, and never convincing. There too, was old Squire Worth,—a man of integrity and good sense, but excessively odd. He was a short thick-set man, round shouldered and *red haired*. He was once induced to sit for his portrait, but quarrelled with the artist for making him look, as he said, “like a one story house with the chimney a fire!” Next comes Mr. Robert Taylor,—a stout, well-dressed, portly looking personage; a little obstinate at times, and a little crusty withal, but a sound republican, or what would now-a-days be termed a thorough-going democrat; though to my eye, his clean shirt, buff vest, and white top boots, betrayed a leaning the other way: And there, in the same circle, sat my old friend, Capt. Alexander Coffin, one of nature’s noblemen; a man open and above board in all things; frank, generous, warm-hearted, and brave as Cæsar. But, withal, hot as a pepper pot, and

fierce as a north-easter; yet neither rude, aggressive, nor implacable. Yes, sir, said he to a young man, who to explain some matter, then in hot dispute, laid his hand upon his shoulder, and asked him to step to the door with him. "Yes, sir," said the old man, (then over eighty,) mistaking the object of the call, "I'm ready for you—fist or pistols, I don't care a d—n which!" The absurdity of the thing set the whole room in a roar, and the old captain, catching the idea, and coming down in an instant, joined heartily in the laugh. Such was Captain Coffin,—a man whose name I never hear, and of whom I never think, without a feeling of deep respect for his many noble and manly qualities. He was in fact the noblest roman of them all.

There is another name which ought not to be left out of this catalogue of political dignitaries,—it is that of David Lawrence—a man of great personal respectability, keen observation, and ready wit; of strong sense, and stronger prejudices. In his old age, gouty, irritable and sarcastic; seldom in humor with himself, and never over complaisant to others. On hearing that the Bank of Nantucket had been robbed,—“Ugh!” said the old man, with an air of contempt, “I suppose they forgot *to pull the string in!*”

The last of this school whose name I shall venture to mention, is Captain Hathaway—a very worthy citizen, but troubled with the asthma, and frequently suffering from the excellence of his dinner; always *talking* of the interests of the nation, but *thinking* only of his own; calculating freights rather than majorities, and wisely relying with more confidence upon his pocket than upon his party. Still, I repeat, he was a worthy citizen, and though close, and somewhat *phthisicy*, an honest man.

The federal club was a very different affair; being principally composed of lawyers and men of distinguished ability. The celebrated Elisha Williams was the master spirit. Their occasional meetings were held in the best furnished apartments of Swartz's or Holly's tavern. It is hardly necessary to add, that where Mr. Williams presided, there was confidence and cordiality, unity of thought and unity of opinion; wit and satire, and eloquence,—professional eminence and political ability. But in this free country, the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Political ability is often unavailing, and political eminence notoriously short-lived. Who can look back upon the party squabbles of the last thirty years, and reflect upon the hollowness

of their pretensions, without amazement? Or upon the passions they excited, without contempt!

But after all, this is rather a *political* than a *civil* world, and it is therefore our duty, as it certainly is our pleasure, to sketch, (ere they dissolve into thin air) the flitting forms of the politicians of our day, and thus confer a favor upon the future annalist, and a benefit upon posterity.

Mr. Williams was not only the great federal leader of the county of Columbia, but the most influential politician of his party in the State. Next to Mr. Williams, stood Jacob Rutsen Van Rensselaer, a gentleman of distinguished ability; learned, eloquent and polite: the cleverest man, perhaps, of his race and name. Then came Thos. P. Grosvenor; well educated and widely read, but, in his younger days, careless, indolent, and apparently unambitious: though subsequently (during his brief parliamentary career) distinguished as one of the ablest debaters on the floor of congress. Of the same political school, though not of the same order of talents, was Hezekiah Lord Hosmer—one of the most majestic looking men in the State, and who, I used to imagine, resembled Louis the XIV., as I fancied my old friend Riker did that heathen poet whom men call Horace. Hosmer was a lawyer by profession

only. He played,<sup>c</sup> however, an admirable game of whist, and had a just taste in poetry. These accomplishments rendered him an agreeable companion, except when you played a *wrong card*, or hazarded an indiscreet opinion as to the merits of some favorite classic. To the above, might be added the names of Backus and of Bay, of M'Kinstry, Edmonds, Hyatt, Hubbell, Van Hoesen, and forty others.

Of the lay members of the party, whose political strength lay mainly in their votes, the most conspicuous as well as the most respectable were Cotton Gelston and Reuben Folger. The latter was, indeed, one of the oldest and wealthiest merchants in the city; strong in his political prejudices, but kind in his feelings and liberal in his hospitality. The election of Mr. Jefferson, he used to say, spoke for itself; it was a signal to the nation, *to heave to, under bare poles*. Prior to the new philosophy of gun-boats and embargoes, he had always, he said, been enabled to find a keg of dollars under his counter, but never after that period. The ship of state (to use his own nautical phrase) had been turned out of her course, and yawed about by a lubberly helmsman, until the voyage was ruined and half the owners broken. Like the malcontents of the present day, he

attributed every evil (fiscal and physical included) to the party in power.

---

## MAJOR FROTHINGHAM.

Though somewhat aloof from the political world, I must not omit to mention the name of Major Frothingham, a name always associated, in my mind, with the word *gentleman*. His personal appearance, his address, action, air and manner, warranted the association. There was an ease and a freedom in his carriage, an open frankness in his countenance, an unpremeditated courtesy in whatever he said or did, that bespoke a manliness of character, which no dress could disguise, no occupation conceal. He kept, at one time, I remember a small retail store near the market; and even the humiliating act, *selling a glass of rum to a loafer*, did not seem in the slightest degree to detract from his dignity, or compromise his character as a gentleman. There he stood behind his little counter, waiting upon his patched and piebald customers, with the careless ease and gentlemanly air of a man engaged in the higher occupations of life. Though there was nothing cold or formal in his aspect, and nothing approaching to austerity in his manner, yet even imperti-



nence became mute, and *rudeness* grew civil in his presence. His fine countenance and the tone of his voice, were, indeed, alone sufficient to command respect, and give dignity to the lowest employment. He was, in fact, one of the fortunate few, who are *born gentlemen*; and who, receiving the impress from nature, are not to be rendered otherwise, by time, chance, or circumstance. It is not in the power of fortune to humiliate such a man, much less to place him in the catalogue of the vulgar. It is hardly necessary to say that he was universally and deservedly respected and esteemed.

---

## THE CHURCH.

Hudson, though she has figured greatly at the bar and on the bench, in the senate, and even in the executive chair; though she has added to the laurels of the army and the navy, and performed wonders in the political world, yet she has contributed nothing to the splendor, and but little to the comfort of the church. This can be reasonably accounted for, only by a reference to the character and condition of her several religious congregations.

In the early and more prosperous days of the

city, the members of the "Society of Friends" greatly exceeded in number those of any other religious sect—while among the sea-faring portion of the population, were to be found many who belonged to no particular church, and consequently paid tribute to none.

This abstraction of so large a number of the inhabitants, left to the regular churches scarce a moiety of the whole. Their respective congregations, therefore, were necessarily small—too small, indeed, to admit of their adding materially either to the pride or the dignity of the church. It must be confessed that a spirit of economy existed in those days, which in the present would be considered as narrow and parsimonious; and that this virtue was more strikingly manifested in matters relating to the church, than in those appertaining to secular affairs. It was an economy that looked to the present rather than the future, and appealed to the pocket rather than to the understanding. In short, it was an economy, in one particular, strikingly in unison with that of the Friends—it had no taste for religious architecture, biblical learning, or pulpit eloquence.

Of the regular denominations, the Friends were not only the most numerous, but the most weal-

thy and influential. Of their *church discipline* I have spoken elsewhere.

Next to the Friends in point of numbers, and next in power, were the Presbyterians. The church of this congregation was the first that was built in the city. The site was well chosen, commanding, as it did, a beautiful view of the south and west — the bay, the river, and the distant mountains. A view, which from its position on the southern verge of the city, no time or circumstance could obstruct. But the good taste of its elders was not in all things equally manifest. They caused their names to be inscribed on tables of stone, and conspicuously inserted in the outer wall of the building on each side of the entrance door: forgetful, it would seem, of those truthful lines of the poet, that he

“Who builds a house to God, and not to fame,  
Will never mark the marble with his name.”

And yet they evidently held in due remembrance *those other lines*, which refer to a village pastor, who was deemed to be

“—————passing rich, with forty pounds a year.”

Taking this as a liberal standard of compensation, and practicing upon its virtues, their preacher starved, — and the congregation slept!

The Episcopalians, though numbering at the

time scarce a dozen families, also built a church, —but which they failed to finish: and which for many years was without any regular or established minister. The building, in the mean time, was shut up, neglected, and in a state of ruin. To the honor of the city it has subsequently been repaired, refitted, and *the path that led to it* greatly improved. The spire, however, (that crowning member) is still wanting—and the church still stands, as it were,

“Obtruncated in the traveler’s horizon!”

The Methodists (the Rev. Sidney Smith’s vituperation of the sect to the contrary notwithstanding) have always appeared to me, in spite of some idle extravagancies, to possess more genuine piety, than any other religious denomination in the United States. Thirty years ago I found the Methodists of the *south* and *west*, the only sect whose religion appeared to me to be worthy of the name.


Of the Catholics, I have nothing to say—for there were none in the city; or if there were, they had no priest, nor place of worship.

Of the Jews, there was but *one*, and that *one* was supposed to be the last of the lost tribe! He certainly had that appearance.

It is a singular circumstance,—I think I may say a singular *fact* in the chronicles of the city, that with the retrogression of its business interests, with the decline of its wealth and prosperity; in one word, with the fall of its temporal pride and power, the interests and the influence of the church revived and rose. It is at least certain, that its affairs, for some time past, have worn, and still wear a brighter aspect, than at any of the earlier periods within my memory.

Of its ministers, (prior to the commencement of the present century,) the Rev. Ezra Sampson was among the most distinguished for classical and biblical learning. He was indeed an excellent writer, a man of sound practical sense, and great purity of mind. His selection of the “beauties of the Bible,” with explanatory notes and comments, was not only useful, but an elegant and most attractive work.

I ought, for old acquaintance sake, to mention one other—the Rev. Mr. Sears. We were for some time fellow boarders in the same house, though fortunately for myself, as it regards *food and raiment*, not fellow laborers in the same field. He was a man of moderate talents, without art, without force, and without even an occasional gleam of eloquence: but honest, warm-hearted,

and of the most exemplary piety. His sermons were exceedingly dull, but not exceedingly tedious—for they had one redeeming, I may say one admirable quality,  they were *short*. In this particular they were in excellent keeping with his compensation and the patience of his hearers. Four hundred dollars, if my memory serves me, was the amount of the one, and fifteen minutes the extent of the other.

When I think of the amiable simplicity of his character, a feeling of personal respect mingles with the thought: when I reflect upon the *judicious brevity of his sermons*, I accuse myself of having unjustly appreciated the character of his understanding.

To each of these gentlemen, and I believe to several others, was presented the hard alternative, of ceasing to *eat*, or ceasing to *preach*. A sense of duty, no doubt, struggled with the question, but the frailty of nature prevailed, and they chose the latter.

---



## THE DOCTORS.

Of the medical faculty of the town, it becomes me to say something. Hudson has indeed been noted for the eminence of its physicians. Among

those of an early date, Doctors Hamilton and Wheaton were perhaps the most conspicuous. At a later period, Tallman, Malcolm and White were distinguished for their skill and ability; particularly the latter, who was also eminent as a surgeon.

Hamilton was an original, both in mind and manner—and I believe I may add, in practice too. His three great remedies, were calomel, bark, and brandy! He was, nevertheless, a well educated, strong-minded man; but fond of hearing himself talk, and careless of time, he often rendered himself disagreeable by his long visits, and still longer stories. He owned a tract of land in the "Genesee country," then a distant wilderness: and I remember hearing him relate to my father, an incident which took place on his first visit to that new settlement. As the story ran, he was alone and on foot in the woods, walking slowly along, totally unarmed; when, all of a sudden, he heard a low, rustling noise, and casting his eyes round, he met the fierce glare of a panther, crouched in the path directly in front of him, and but a few yards distant. What was to be done, was a *question*, which (as he gravely remarked to my father) he had no time to *discuss*. But catching, as he said, an idea from despera-

tion, he instantly resolved to become the assailant. He had on at the time a dark camlet cloak, lined with red baize, which he contrived to whirl suddenly over his head, in such a manner as to turn the *red side* out, giving at the same time a furious yell, and springing directly at the panther—who, alarmed at the fiery aspect, or astounded at the sudden metamorphosis of his intended prey, made an ignoble and precipitate retreat, disappearing at a single bound !

What the reader may think of the probabilities of the story, I knew not, but I wish it to be distinctly understood, that 'tis the *Doctor's* story, not mine.

Of Doctor Tallman, I can truly say, that he was one of the finest looking men in the city ; large, portly, well-dressed, and of the most polished and gentlemanly manners. He was, indeed, in personal appearance, air and manner, the *beau ideal* of the medical faculty. It is not surprising, that with these attractive qualities, he should be a favorite with nearly all the women in the town, nor that *they* should have secured to him a larger share of practice, (particularly in the most profitable line of his profession) than was enjoyed by any other physician in the place.

Malcolm was a gentleman in the highest sense



of the word—a man of education, of talent, and of science. But, unable or unwilling to stoop to the familiar arts and gossiping language of the nursery—in other words, to conciliate ignorance and flatter vanity, (so essential to medical success) he literally starved in his profession.

Doctor White, it is needless to say, had all the practice he desired—and has left behind him a reputation, equal to that of any other physician in the State—in some branches of his profession, perhaps superior. He was a man of great probity of mind and purity of character.

---

## LOAFERS.

I now turn to a class of personages, differing in many respects from any that I have yet attempted to describe. They formed, however, a portion of the population of the city, or its immediate vicinity, and were, moreover, too prominent in their day, to be omitted in a body of reminiscences which profess to embrace the physical aspect and personal peculiarities of the town.

Among the most singular and striking animals of the biped species, which were to be met with in the streets of Hudson, was a free negro by the name of Tite, and a white negro by the name of

Bangs. Tite was blacker than the ace of spades, and had an impediment in his speech, or rather a sort of spasmodic stutter, which was truly terrific. His mouth opened and shut as with a spring, exhibiting a set of teeth which would have done honor to a shark, or even to a patent corn-grinder. Bangs, on the other hand, was as fair as he was foul. They were both butchers by profession, and both huge, fat, and feloniously greasy rogues. Indeed, the growl and the greasiness of Bangs were a warning to all well-dressed pedestrians, to *clear the road!*

Now, let it be remembered, in justification of *this sketch*, (or of my memory for preserving it) that the mayor of the city, was not more familiarly known than *Tite*, nor was the sheriff's deputy a more formidable personage than Bangs.

About the same period in which the above mentioned dignitaries flourished, there resided in the neighborhood of the city, a wild, crazy, fire-eyed fellow, known by the name of Old John Willod—whose wife, it was said, had turned his brain, and whose relations, it was believed, had picked his pockets. He was a sort of erratic meteor in the moving world; sometimes mild and sometimes mischievous. He sung psalms and catches upon the hills, threw up his arms into

the air, and cut such terrific capers as frightened the boys out of their wits, and even attracted the attention of the cattle in the field. At the sound of his voice in the streets, the housemaids ran in and hasped their doors, while the youngerlings dropt their marbles and fled like quicksilver. He seemed to take a special pleasure in frightening the smaller boys whenever he came across them either in the town or the fields. I must say, however, that I have no recollection of his ever doing them any other injury. On one occasion, I remember, crazy as he was, he got out-witted; or, in nautical phrase, "got brought up with a wet sail." A smart active boy of about 12 years of age and myself (a little younger) were out one day in the fields after blackberries, when all of a sudden we heard the terrific voice of Old Willod. We were, at the time, a mile and a half from the town, near the foot of the hills that slope down to the bay on the south side of the city. He was upon the high grounds above us, fair in sight, swinging his arms like a wind-mill in the air, and evidently shaping his course towards us. We held a moment's counsel, and saw that we were too far from home to escape by a race in that direction, we therefore, (half frightened to death, and pale as ashes) pull'd foot for the bay,

along the margin of which ran a narrow winding foot path, leading to the city. Our object was to get under cover as quick as possible, and conceal ourselves among the cattails and alders that grew thick along the water's edge, and thus if possible elude the pursuit of the enemy. On striking the foot path, we found ourselves within a few yards of a deep and narrow gorge of one of the ravines *into* which the waters of the bay flowed at high tide, and *over* which, a single plank twelve or fourteen feet in length, had been thrown by way of bridge to the line of path. This we crossed, and knew that our *pursuer* must also cross it before he could reach us. Though not well versed in the *science* of retreat, (having little or no acquaintance at that time with either Xenophon or Moreau,) yet we had, in common with all the weaker animals, an instinctive knowledge of its philosophy. We saw, and immediately availed ourselves of the advantages which the bridge afforded us to check the advance of the enemy. By uniting our forces, we shoved back the plank to the very edge of the ravine; just leaving it ground enough upon our side to support its weight, and no more. This done, we concealed ourselves in the grass behind the bushes, within ear-shot of the bridge, and waited the issue. In a few min-

utes we heard his approach. On he came, as furious as Pharoah in his pursuit of the children of Israel. Hark! he is now within ten yards of the plank—now on it—and now, down he goes, head over heels, into the water! We heard the *splash* and *flounder*, and knew his position exactly. The water was three or four feet deep: the bottom was adhesive mud,—the sides of the gorge were slippery clay, almost perpendicular, and the edge of the bank at least six feet above the water. He had one of two things to do, either to swim out into the bay and then round the cape of the outlet; or to flounder up the ravine until he could find a more convenient landing place. Either operation would occupy more time than we should require to place ourselves beyond his reach. We knew, moreover, that he would not be in a condition to renew the race: feeling therefore perfectly safe, we rose from our lair as bold as young lions, and shouted to him *to come on!* The only answer was an inarticulate grumbling and a renewed splashing in the water. After an additional shout or two, by way of defiance, we pursued our course leisurely along the foot path towards the city, leaving our enemy in the muddy gorge, *alone in his glory!*

There were in those days *two other stars* wan-

dering in the same hemisphere, of a somewhat kindred character. The one was familiarly known by the name of "Old Brooks," the other, by that of *Copper John*! Brooks belonged to the antiquities of the old world. He certainly had all the appearances of an ante-diluvian. Yet I never could learn that his history had been traced further back than to the period of the *Van Tromps* of the Netherlands. He came, it was said, from Amsterdam, in, or about, the year 1652, and was supposed to be at the time, somewhere in the vicinity of one hundred years of age! But I do not vouch for the accuracy of these traditions. I first saw him in 1788: and after the lapse of eighteen or twenty years, he still appeared in all respects unchanged. His habits were unaltered, his faculties unabated, and the light of his eye undimmed. Time, in that interval at least, seemed to have made no impression upon him. There was, indeed, no place left for a new twist or a new wrinkle. As for the ordinary signs of age, he had long since ran through the catalogue, and exhausted their number. His head, his hands, and his voice, had been shaking, as if with the palsy, for half a century, and were shaking still. His little twinkling eye and the tip of his nose, were all that could be seen of his face. His lan-

guage would have puzzled Horne Tooke himself, and might have added a new chapter to the "Diversions of Purley." It was a dialect compounded of three other dialects—high dutch, low dutch, and broken english, and to those unused to it, utterly unintelligible. His outside garment, which was always the same, winter and summer, was composed of as many colors as Joseph's coat. The original texture had long since been lost and covered under a cloud of patches. His shoes were fastened to his feet by thongs and fibres of bark. He wore a little cocked hat, banded and brailed with divers colored strings, which might, from its form and fashion, have been worn by De Ruyter himself. His pipe, black with the smoke of a thousand years, still answered the ends for which it was created, and gave to his figure in a frosty morning an additional sign of vitality.

He lived about three miles from the city, to which he traveled on foot, twice or three times a week, the year round. He carried a willow basket strapped upon his back, filled with roots and herbs, mostly of a medicinal character. These simples he gathered with his own hands, and it was by the sale of these he obtained his livelihood. Old and poor as he was, and lone and miserable as he seemed, yet he was never known

to beg or to complain. On the contrary, he seemed to enjoy good health, was always cheerful, and apparently contented.

Who will dare to say, that old Brooks was not watched by the eye, and upheld and protected by the hand of providence!

COPPER JOHN, though resembling Brooks in some things, was very unlike him in others. He had no knowledge of the medical qualities of roots and herbs. He had no taste for the culling of simples, and no disposition to traffic in any thing. He took no thought for the morrow, either as to what he should eat or what he should drink; it was sufficient for him to know that he could find his way into a kitchen in the day time, and into a barn at night.

But John was in no sense a responsible person. His intellectual pitcher was cracked, and the vessel was therefore unfit for use. Yet he possessed great bodily strength, and was certainly capable of some things if not others. He could split wood and fetch water; he could beg, too, but not like a beggar; he could work, but not like a man; he was in size, a giant, but huge and strong as he was, he nevertheless submitted to any show of authority, and put up with any kind of treatment; hence, he was always in the hands of the boys,



who played him an endless variety of tricks; they did him some good and much evil; they forced him to work, and learned him to drink, though he had no great taste for either. He had a natural antipathy to cats, which the boys soon found out, and John, to his horror, every now and then, found one attached by a cord to the tail of his coat. His first impression, on these occasions, was to run and roar,—the cat had no choice but to follow his example; and such a roaring on the one side, and such a caterwauling on the other, was never heard before in any civilized town! The boys were in fact John's best friends and worst enemies. They were liberal in their gifts, (his whole wardrobe indeed came from them,) but they made him pay for their liberality in various and most annoying ways. They contrived, without his perceiving it, to tar the inside of his hat; they even put powder in his pipe, and ipecac and ginger in his gin; all of which he bore like a philosopher,—nay, the medicated gin he swallowed without making a wry face.

But that which more particularly distinguished John from all other loafers, cracked or uncracked, was his passion for coppers; and as he was never known to part with one, it was believed that he hid them in holes, or buried them in the ground.

He would take no other coin, not even as a gift, and hence his name of Copper John. He loitered about the town and its vicinity for some ten or fifteen years, without any occupation, home or common resting place; and yet, was never seen in a suffering condition. He was, seemingly, proof against all diseases, winds and weathers. Though he readily comprehended whatever was said to him, yet his mind was little better than a *tabula rasa*.

At length, however, John disappeared; and, as he came, no one knew whence, so he went, no one knew whither; and but for this incidental notice, the knowledge of his existence on earth, might have been lost forever!

It has often occurred to me, that if I should *hereafter* meet with old Brooks and Copper John, I should at once be recognized as an old acquaintance, and receive a hearty shake of the hand from both. John would no doubt ask me, as he had done *in this world* many a time before "what I tied that *devilish cat* to the tail of his coat for?" And old Brooks would probably enquire whether I had yet learned to talk dutch!

Now, it may seem to the reader that I have given to these personages a degree of importance disproportioned to their *rank and station* in life. It

is true they have not the dignity that belongs to the character of Mrs. Giles: but it must be remembered that they formed a connecting link in the associations of other days; and that to have passed them by unnoticed, would have left a hiatus in the page of personal history, which no effort of the imagination could hereafter have filled. Besides, they were old acquaintances of mine,—with the one, I had been amused in the town, with the other, I had gathered fruits and flowers in the field; and seeing them upon the very verge of oblivion, passing as it were unheeded from the memory of man, I was bound by every christian principle to make at least one effort for their rescue. Not to have done so, would have been unkind, uncourteous, and even ungrateful.

Though the stores of memory are not yet exhausted, the time and patience of the reader probably are. Yet were I to close these reminiscences of my native town, with this account of its vagrants, lunatics and loafers, it might possibly leave an impression unfavorable to the general character of its population. I shall therefore, as a peace-offering to the pride of the city, and as an offset to the history of its Jemmy Frazers and Copper Johns, introduce to the reader another, and a very different class of citizens.

## STATESMEN, JURISTS, &c.

Among the residents of Hudson, in its palmier days, were Ambrose Spencer, Elisha Williams, William W. Van Ness, and Martin Van Buren — men who were alike distinguished for their social virtues, their political eminence, and professional ability; men whose names are connected with the growth and the greatness of the state; with the history of its forensic and parliamentary eloquence, its judicial reputation and intellectual character. Many others might be named of equal respectability, though less distinguished in an official or public point of view.

In this connection, and second only to the veterans of the elder school, are to be classed (as professionally educated in Hudson) the names of Monell, of Betts, of Edmonds, and of Jordan — names highly creditable to the city, the bench, and the bar.

---

## ELISHA JENKINS.

This gentleman was the most distinguished member of the once numerous and wealthy family whose name is inseparably connected with the early history of the city. Though liberally educated, his turn of mind led him to mercantile

rather than to professional pursuits: and he became a leading partner in the well-known house of "Thomas Jenkins & Sons." Retiring from business with a competent fortune, he took an active part in the political contest that brought Mr. Jefferson into power. Shortly after that event, he removed from Hudson to Albany, where he received the appointment of comptroller, and subsequently that of secretary of state. He was a man of excellent sense and sound judgment: and carried with him into public life, amenity of manners, strict integrity, and business habits. He was an accomplished merchant, an upright and intelligent public officer, a liberal minded politician, and a perfect gentleman in every walk of life.

Among the able and influential men of the county, though not residents of the city, I may be permitted to mention the names of John C. Hogeboom and William P. Van Ness. In strong native talent, in penetration of mind, in clearness of perception and justness of judgment, no man in the county was superior to Mr. Hogeboom; nor was the sterling integrity and manliness of his character less conspicuous.

In Mr. Van Ness, (afterwards judge of the U. S. District Court) were united the accomplish-

ments of the gentleman and the scholar. His talents were of the highest order. Of his abilities as a writer, and of the bitterness of his political enmities, his famous pamphlet under the signature of *Aristides*, bears ample testimony. His sincerity as a friend has been sometimes, but I think *unjustly* doubted—the uncompromising steadiness of his enmity, was, I believe, never called in question. These gentlemen were among the earliest friends of Mr. Van Buren, who, (in 1808) had already acquired a respectable standing at the bar, and was then just commencing his patriot career, with his aspiring foot, cautiously but significantly planted upon the first round of the political ladder.

Professional eminence, and the alluring office of Attorney-General, were as yet the highest objects to which his ambitious eye was directed. He had already successfully measured his strength with his great antagonists at the bar, and without losing any portion of his respect for their abilities, very justly acquired more confidence in his own. At a subsequent period—but we have not the space, nor is this the fitting occasion, for an historical portrait of one so politically eminent, so highly gifted, so widely renowned, and yet so variously estimated. The theme, however tempt-

ing, is, we repeat, too broad for our present canvass. We shall, therefore, in relation to this distinguished personage, hold, (as in honor bound,) our humble recollections in reserve: and doffing our cap to "His Excellency," respectfully beg permission to pass quietly on, to ground less debatable, and to reminiscences of a less hazardous nature.

Among the number of her *native born* citizens, Hudson may point with pride to many who have risen to distinction by their own merits, unaided, either by the advantages of wealth or the patronage of power. On this list, among others, will be found the names of William J. Worth and William H. Allen. The former, by the force of native genius, raised himself to rank and eminence in the army, and by his courage, capacity and skill, has earned a reputation which would reflect a lustre upon the proudest city in the union. The latter, devoted his life to the service of his country, and by his gallantry upon the ocean won an imperishable name.

I might with justice, did not delicacy forbid, inscribe upon the same list, the name of another of her heroic sons, — I might speak of one, whose career upon the ocean, like that of Lieut. Allen, was closed by an untimely death; whose fortune

allowed him but one chance for fame, but who nobly availed himself of *that one*, and with his gallant companions in arms, fought for the honor of the American flag, in the harbor of Fayal, one of the most desperate, and to the enemy, (numbers considered,) one of the bloodiest battles of the war of 1812.









